GEORGE ELIOT'S

Family Life And Letters

By ARTHUR PATERSON

THESE letters, now published with few exceptions for the first time, are not the literary compositions of the great author, but the notes of an affectionate woman telling domestic news to a boy. In addition, there are more than a score of unpublished letters by George Henry Lewes to his sons and his daughter-in-law which contain characteristic sketches of George Eliot.

The biographical memoir that accompanies the letters gives a vivid yet simple picture of George Eliot's personality and family life.

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GEORGE ELIOT'S
FAMILY LIFE AND LETTERS

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY.

From a water colour painting by Mrs. Allingham.

GEORGE ELIOT'S FAMILY LIFE AND LETTERS

By
ARTHUR PATERSON

Author of "HOMES OF TENNYSON,"
"OLIVER CROMWELL" (A Biography), ETC.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	FOREWORD	ix
I.	THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE	1
II.	FREEDOM	9
III.	THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW	21
IV.	INTERREGNUM	29
V.	HAPPINESS	40
VI.	THE HARVEST	52
VII.	LETTERS OF GEORGE ELIOT, GEORGE HENRY LEWES, CHARLES AND THORNTON LEWES, 1859-1878	68
VIII.	DESOLATION	175
IX.	LETTERS OF GEORGE ELIOT, 1878–1879	181
X.	A NEW CHAPTER	213
XI.	LETTERS OF GEORGE ELIOT, 1880	217
XII.	MEMORIES	249

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY. . . . . *Frontispiece*

GEORGE ELIOT (From a Study by H. D. Clark) . . 50

MARIAN LEWES 77

THORNTON LEWES 82

CHARLES LEWES 112

GERTRUDE LEWES 152

LETTER FROM GEORGE ELIOT (*in facsimile*) . . . 158

LETTERS FROM GEORGE DU MAURIER (*in facsimile*) . 170

GEORGE HENRY LEWES 174

LAST LETTER TO C. L. L. FROM GEORGE ELIOT (*in facsimile*) 248

FOREWORD

ANOTHER book about a writer whose biographers have been legion, and whose works still occupy the shelves of countless households in two hemispheres—albeit their bindings may seem to some a little old-fashioned—demands a few words of explanation.

The most important feature in this volume is the collection of George Eliot's letters which, with a few exceptions, is now published for the first time. These letters are not to be taken as the literary compositions of a great author, philosopher and thinker, but rather—and herein lies their charm—as the notes of an affectionate woman telling domestic news about herself and "Pater" to a boy who, even when he became a man in years, was to her still just "A top-knotted Chick." In addition there are more than a score of unpublished letters by George Henry Lewes to his sons and his daughter-in-law, Gertrude Lewes, which contain characteristic sketches of "the little Mutter"; while last, but not least, are included a few letters from the lads themselves.

The biographical memoir accompanying the letters is designed to give a picture as vivid and simple

as possible of George Eliot's personality and family life. The writer is alone responsible, of course, for these impressions; but acknowledgment is due to George Henry Lewes's grandchildren, Blanche Lewes (now Mrs. Hanson) and Maud Lewes (Mrs. Hopwood), for much first-hand information. I have also to thank Mrs. Emily Geddes of Hampstead, whose recollections, both of George Eliot and of George Henry Lewes, extended over a great number of years. Mrs. Geddes, formerly Miss Emily Bury, was a daughter of Dr. Bury of Coventry, who attended George Eliot's father in his last illness, and a sister of Mrs. Congreve, afterwards one of George Eliot's dearest friends. I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Elinor Lewes (now Mrs. E. C. Ouvry), the youngest grand-daughter. The letters are her property, and but for her sympathy and help the work would not have been undertaken.

ARTHUR PATERSON.

GEORGE ELIOT'S FAMILY LIFE AND LETTERS

CHAPTER I

THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE

1819–41

GEORGE ELIOT'S life began at the old Griff Farm, near Bedworth, Warwickshire. We see her, a tot of three or four, who learned to read rather slowly because—her brother said—she liked playing so much better; a baggage who—being "possessed with the idea that she was going to be a personage in the world"—solemnly sat down at a piano and played on it, though she did not know one note from another, in order to impress a servant "with a proper notion of her acquirements and generally distinguished position." A year later a forlorn waif, banished by her mother's ill-health to a boarding-school for three years, where she was starved with cold in winter, because the fireplace was too narrow, and the girls who wanted to keep warm too many, and terrified at night because she had to sleep alone. In the holidays, however, a happy little girl playing exclusively with a brother

three years her elder, and driving between her father's knees, about the country. Through it all an old-fashioned child who watched, listened to, and remembered, everything she saw and heard, and between whiles talked herself more than most ; a little creature " already living in a world of her own imagination, impressionable to her finger-tips and willing to give her views on every subject."

Her parents, Robert and Christiana Evans, were plain country folk, shrewd, hard-working and very efficient, her father a clever farmer and land agent. They were high-principled people, kind-hearted and generous, and able to see that their youngest was not as other children, but too severely limited intellectually to understand her in the least. Her brothers and sisters appear to have been equally limited, and, as often happens, even less capable of appreciating this little person of intensely active and original mind, remarkable powers of plain speech, and, at the same time, possessed of an unsatiable hunger for sympathy, companionship and demonstrative affection.

The small girl was not unhappy as children go, and when following the call of her genius she took to reading at the age of five everything she could lay her hands on, or that anyone would give or lend her, from the Bible to Defoe's " History of the Devil," from Waverley to Joe Miller, she was allowed to go her own way unchecked, even by an anxious

and economical mother who naturally objected to a phenomenal consumption of candles in a bedroom at night. She grew, therefore, intellectually, at a great rate, but it was as a weed grows—without direction, care, or pruning, and living in solitude of mind and soul, she drew instinctively into herself and lived apart from those of her own age, enjoying and suffering alone.

This was inevitable under the circumstances, but when, at the age of twelve, Marian went off to her first large school, and fell into the companionship of girls older than herself, a change for the better might have been expected, and the solitary little person who was yet very companionable become more like other people. Unfortunately her school life was a tragedy of errors. What Marian needed was to learn the lesson which children unfailingly teach each other if given opportunity: that brains are not everything, and that discipline must be observed and respect given to senior scholars by their juniors, whatever the abilities of the juniors may be. But in Marian's case, without any fault of her own, this discipline never took place. Her mistresses were responsible. This quaintly serious, immensely clever, and extraordinarily well-informed child took them by storm. They placed her at once upon a pedestal—and kept her there.

"While the themes of other children," writes a contemporary of her's, "were read, criticised and

corrected in class, Marian's were reserved for the private perusal and enjoyment of the teachers, who rarely found anything to correct." Doubtless! but why punish the Admirable Crichton by placing her in such a position that the same authority is constrained to add—" the girls loved her as much as they could venture to love one whom they felt to be so immeasurably superior to themselves."

This, though very creditable to their docility, was incredibly bad for the superior person. It is not difficult to picture the effect of such worship upon the nature of a passionately impressionable child, whose ambitious little soul was even then seeking the highest, and who loathed false quantities, and detested of all things to be thought " immeasurably superior " in anything. No wonder that when her teachers, blissfully pursuing their career of unconscious crime, summoned " Miss Evans " to their parlour to play the piano for their amusement as " the best performer in the school," the child suffered so much in the process that she would afterwards " rush to her room and throw herself on the floor in an agony of tears."

But worse was to come. While Marian, perforce it would seem, queened it in solitary state among her school-fellows, she became subject in a marked degree to religious influences of a violently emotional kind. Her mistresses, being steeped in such influences themselves, encouraged her in every way,

and before the child was fourteen we hear of her taking a " foremost place " in the school and becoming a leader of prayer-meetings among the girls. Such an experience might have done little permanent harm to the average young person who, as in Marian's case, returned in time to the bosom of a family of practical people of sober views. But this girl was not as others: she was sensitively reserved, and she had no one at home able to understand, much less to guide, her eager passionate longings for perfection into right channels, and being exceedingly tenacious and very spirited, when an idea had once entered her mind she cherished and fought for it against all comers.

Marian, from the age of thirteen, until at twenty she was brought at last into close contact with people of culture and brains, lived in the darkness of immature and undigested ideas of the Universe and life's duties which she proceeded, as far as she could, to inculcate upon all around her.

Outwardly, though she was seen to be a " serious " girl—a great virtue in the eyes of most of her relatives—her life was not different from that of other girls of her position. It was a most unselfish one and very difficult. She was only sixteen when her mother died after a very painful illness. Her elder sister married not long afterwards, and Marian took charge for her father, and had to fulfil the duties of head of the house. With the thoroughness and

conscientiousness which marked everything she did, the girl became an admirable housewife, and in addition visited the poor, organised clothing clubs, and generally fulfilled, in a very active way, the functions of a land-agent's daughter of those days.

But underneath it all, as we know from her letters to Miss Lewis, a teacher at the school where the prayer meetings had been held, and from chance references of her own in after days, the girl's mind was afflicted with the corrosive conviction that that ultra-self-conscious renunciation of all the ordinary pleasures of life was the only conduct proper for professing Christians. Amusement of any kind was not to be tolerated; light reading was anathema; care of style in dress, for persons of either sex, gross vanity; and society, in a worldly sense, a snare.

On her first visit to London at eighteen she would not go to any theatres, and she writes to a friend at the time :—

"When I hear of the marrying and giving in marriage that is constantly being transacted, I can only sigh for those who are multiplying earthly ties which, though powerful enough to detach their heads and hearts from Heaven, are so brittle as to be liable to be snapped asunder at every breeze."

Poor little mortal! To such depth had the unnatural stimulation of an unhealthy outlook

furnished by adulatory schoolmates and foolish mistresses and an entire lack of any wise guidance, or of cheerful equal companionship of other girls, reduced her conceptions of life. The extraordinary thing is that in many ways she was a mature woman even at that early age. The range of her reading was enormous; her knowledge from a purely intellectual standpoint equally wide. Yet in outlook she was cramped, dreary, unnatural and uninspiring. She had joined hands for the time, "with eagerness and conviction," with the people who, in her own words—"believe that those are happiest who are not fermenting themselves by engaging in projects for earthly bliss, who are considering this life merely as a pilgrimage, a scene calling for diligence and watchfulness, not for repose and amusement."

It would not be just to lay this obsession of misdirected emotional impulses entirely to Marian's school experiences. These laid the foundation for a good deal of it, but her own nature intensified the effect of these early teachings, for she was always inclined to be over conscientious and distrustful of the happier side of things. As she says of Maggie Tulliver in "The Mill on the Floss": "Her life was a dream, and she often lost the spirit of humility by being excessive in the outward act." Moreover, existence in a remote country place for such a girl was in itself most monotonous and

discouraging. The cultivation of her mind which went on steadily in spite of everything, increased the ambition which lay behind all her diffidence and humility. Yet there was no scope, no chance of fulfilment open to her anywhere, and, with the consciousness of great powers, a full passionate nature unsatisfied by any companionship whatever, "George Eliot" ate her heart out slowly in those years, a restless, tortured creature enclosed in prison bars.

CHAPTER II

FREEDOM

1841–46

"TAKE care of yourself, my child," quoth an old lady to Marian once, "You will be quite another person if you get some introductions to clever people. You'll get on among a certain set—that's true!"

It was particularly true when the serious-minded, self-distrustful but eagerly ambitious girl left the home of her childhood at twenty-two, in 1841, upon her brother Isaac's marriage, and went to live alone with her father in the town of Coventry.

Such a removal was a complete break with all old associations. Coventry was a quiet place then: very conventional; divided into "sets" of land-owners, professional and business people; trades-people and "the poor," none of which were inclined, one gathers, to extend the open hand of hospitality to the Evans's who were socially somewhere between the second and third strata.

"I hope to-day"—Marian writes seven months after her arrival in the place—"to effect a breach in the thick wall of indifference behind which the

denizens of Coventry seem inclined to entrench themselves, but I fear I shall fail."

Even this attempt was only made through a previous meeting with one of the party in the old home a year before. But all unconsciously on that afternoon Marian was going to meet her fate, and a very happy one, destined to remould her life upon fresh lines, and emancipate her soul from the spiritual bondage of her youth.

The family she visited consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bray—he a ribbon manufacturer keenly interested in philosophic subjects; she, a motherly affectionate-hearted, but withal shrewdly observant, woman, and Mrs. Bray's sister, Miss Sara Hennell, a scholar and writer, and a Mrs. Pears. Mrs. Pears, as the first to meet Marian, had awakened the interest of the family in the girl, and at once, upon this visit the "breach" was made and they took the forlorn damsel to their hearts. The advantage was not all on one side. The Brays were clever, cultivated people, and this girl, whose hunger for knowledge was as great as her need for sympathetic companionship and family affection, and who had read and thought deeply upon a wide range of subjects, was a delightful acquisition to her new friends.

It came about thereafter that Marian found herself at the time when she needed it most, a centre of interest among people of refined taste and educa-

tion who were in personal touch with writers of distinction in science, poetry and religion.

They petted her, these good people, like a child. Mrs. Bray had a young family, and Marian, mothered with the rest, became her elder daughter. Charles Bray, a man of lively humour, rallied the girl in her " moods " ; chaffed her out of her depressions, and argued over and disputed—always wittily and pleasantly—every one of her dogmatisms, religious and otherwise. Sara Hennell, the scholar, with whom Marian became more intimate than with any of the others, met her on equal ground on every subject and drew forth her powers of mind, correcting unconsciously, as time went on, its crude immaturities born of solitude, and drawing it into deeper channels of thought. Miss Hennell, at the same time, was as warmly affectionate as the rest of her family, gave love to her friend without stint, and received in return whole-hearted sympathy and understanding from the younger woman.

This family was indeed the " certain set " of people Marian had sorely needed for so long. They took care of her, who never in her life properly cared for herself. With them she could exchange views upon matters which had hitherto interested no one but herself, and under their influence she broke through the bars of her cage of morbid self-introspection and loneliness of soul, and was free.

The natural and inevitable result of this freedom

was a fundamental change in her religious views. This change was not due to any attempt by the Brays to influence her. They were unable, indeed, to understand her Evangelical view-point in religion, but it was entirely contrary to their principles to uproot earnest faith of any kind. The motive force of the change in Marian's beliefs came from within. It was not in her nature, as her mind reached maturity, to accept blindly any teachings upon the highest duties of life. She diligently and even passionately sought for light ; but it had to satisfy her reason : it had to stand the test of the closest examination of historical and scientific facts.

George Eliot, after casting off the Evangelical faith, never identified herself with any recognised form of belief or unbelief. Her dearest friends now were Positivists, but she did not become one. In the later years of her life she was closely connected with Unitarians, but she never adopted the Unitarian faith. Her attitude towards religion during the whole of her life remained that of an enquirer, and a sympathetic friend—but no more than a friend—to all Beliefs except those which bound the believer to a narrow dogmatic creed.

" My whole soul has been engrossed "—she wrote to Miss Lewis, her old mistress of the Misses Franklin's school, soon after the friendship with the Bray's began—" in the most interesting of all enquiries for the last few days, and to what result

my thoughts may lead I know not—possibly to one that will startle you; but my only desire is to know the truth, my only fear to cling to error."

This was the beginning—also the end. The last words epitomise the guiding principle of George Eliot's life in far more than religious thought; they are the key to any complete understanding of her otherwise passionate, impulsive and apparently self-contradictory personality. All her life she was a seeker after truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. This was as characteristic in after days, when she was the most courted and worshipped of writers, as in these early times of rapid but wayward intellectual growth. It was to be found in her greatest novels, as much as in the letters she scribbled to Miss Lewis and others, before she was twenty. When we read these letters and compare them with others written in later times we see this clearly. She worshipped Hannah More at eighteen; she poured scorn upon her writings ten years later. She had scathing things to say about the Jews when she was thirty; she lived to write "Daniel Deronda," and idealise the race. As age and experience came upon Marian she learned gradually to be less impulsive in her judgments and to deliberate longer before she spoke her mind; but she never failed to speak her mind, and to take action accordingly, for the sake of what she believed to be the truth, no matter what the consequences

might be to herself or to other people. This was part and parcel of her nature. Yet—for she was very much a woman and deeply sensitive to the feelings of others—when by so doing she hurt those whom she loved, she suffered intense pain, and if any way could be found would strive to the utmost to make it up to them ; and her letters to younger generations were full of earnest exhortation against destructive criticism of old traditions and beliefs, no matter how much out-worn they might seem to be. But with all this, and even when she suffered severely from reactionary moods herself, as she was prone to do, she was inflexible over the principle that no one should try to retain beliefs when once enquiry had shown them to be false, or cling to a fallen idol, no matter how precious might be its associations.

The first consequence of all this, as we have seen, was that the Evangelical beliefs of her girlhood fell from her like a garment. The reading of a book at this time by Charles Hennell—" An Inquiry concerning the origin of Christianity "—which denied the authenticity of the Miracles and the Resurrection, and, though written in a reverent spirit, called a spade a spade—" Marked," it has been said, " an epoch in her development." It fitted in exactly with what had been passing subconsciously in her own mind, and made a deep impression upon her. After that the Bible, though the Book

of Books to her always,—one which she read almost daily to the end of her life, ceased as far as she was concerned, to be "inspired" in the orthodox sense of the word. Yet she drew more inspiration and comfort from those writings than many a professed Christian reader. In a letter to Miss Sara Hennell, written five years after her Evangelical beliefs had been cast aside, we have striking evidence of this.

"Many things"—she says—"have concurred to make this November far happier than the last. One's thoughts are '*widened with the process of the suns*'; and if one is rather doubtful whether one is really wiser or better, it is some comfort to know that the desire to be so is pure and dominant. I have been thinking of that most beautiful passage in Luke's Gospel—the appearance of Jesus to His disciples at Emmaus. How universal in its significance! The soul that has hopelessly followed its Jesus—its impersonation of the highest and best—all in despondency; its thoughts all refuted; its dreams all dissipated! Then comes another Jesus—another but the same—the same highest and best, only chastened—crucified instead of triumphant—and the soul learns that this is the true way to conquest and glory. And then there is the burning of the heart, which assures that 'this was the Lord'—that this is the inspiration from above—the true Comforter that leads unto truth."

Marian's change of view, however, immediately

and directly affected her family life. The girl, who was nothing if she were not direct and positive in pursuit of truth, the moment she realised that the tenets of the orthodox were not hers any longer, felt it to be a sin to go to church to listen to their exposition. This brought her at once into collision with the person dearest to her on earth—her father. He was not, we gather, Evangelical in his views; he was just a convinced, old-fashioned churchman of the day, to whom any person refusing to attend religious worship for any reason whatsoever was outside the pale.

A serious and lamentable crisis at once arose. The very love between father and daughter, who were now wholly dependent upon one another, inflamed the wound, and being very much alike they fell hopelessly apart for a time. Mr. Evans, we gather, expressed his feelings without stint or consideration for his daughter—who could have been brought by gentle means to see, at once, that she was exaggerating the importance of the matter; and this harshness, of course, set her more strongly than ever to cling to her own point of view. Both, it is clear, suffered equally at the bottom of their hearts, but neither had the smallest intention of yielding an inch. As a result Mr. Evans at once put his house, in which they lived together, into the hands of an agent, while his daughter, with equal promptitude, began preparations to establish

herself in lonely lodgings, which would have to be of the humblest kind, since at that time she was wholly dependent on her father and must find some means to earn a livelihood.

In such a case, very much depends on the influence exerted by the friends and relations most closely concerned with the parties in dispute, and it is delightful to record that not only did Isaac Evans, Marian's brother, intervene strongly by inducing her to come and stay with him, at the same time begging his father "to do nothing hastily," while on the other side the Brays gently but firmly took Marian herself in hand—but when the girl reached her old home Miss Rebecca Franklin, her Evangelical school-mistress, laid hold of the nettle, dealt so tenderly with the girl, and used her influence with such good effect, that the impending tragedy of separation between father and daughter was averted: Mr. Evans took the house out of his agent's hands, and Marian consented to go regularly with him to church thereafter.

With the members of her own family Marian's change in religious beliefs made little outward difference. Whatever Isaac and his sister thought they kept mostly to themselves. It did not weaken Marian's relationship with her brother, and, as we have seen, Miss Franklin, who was most nearly affected, being intensely fond and proud of her old pupil, was broad-minded enough, not only

to forgive, but even in some measure to understand.

It was not so with another side of the Evans' family. Marian's Aunt Elizabeth, her father's sister-in-law, a devout Methodist and a woman-preacher, from whose life and experience (apart from personality) Dinah Morris in "Adam Bede" was taken, never forgave the niece to whom she had formerly been so devoted. Miss Poppoæ Vanda, the granddaughter of this aunt, has described vividly to the writer how, in her childhood, her mother—the daughter of Aunt Elizabeth—held up George Eliot as an example of all that was wicked.

This estrangement saddened Marian exceedingly. It is related that she went to see her aunt in later years to try to heal the breach, but only a very painful interview was the result.

In contrast to the point of view of Aunt Elizabeth —not to be wondered at in one whose whole mental and moral horizon was confined to her own religious convictions—was Marian's reception by a Mr. and Mrs. Sibree, people as Evangelical in their belief as any of her relations and other friends. They lived near Coventry and welcomed her to their house when she first went there. Mary Sibree, a daughter, much younger than Marian, writes very charmingly about what happened soon afterwards. She tells how, as soon as Marian's heresy became known, Mrs. Sibree determined to save the brand

from the burning, and for this purpose sent for the girl and for four hours exhorted and expostulated with her. Marian, we gather, replied in kind, and at the end pathetically exclaimed: "Now, Mrs. Sibree, you won't care to have anything more to do with me."

To this, however, her friend made the unexpected reply: "On the contrary, I shall feel more interested in you than ever."

That this was seriously meant is proved by a close friendship which from that time forth grew up between Marian and Mary Sibree, and that the younger girl became soon afterwards Marian's pupil in German and was openly her devout admirer.

After describing the scene of her mother's failure to convert her friend, she writes: "It was very evident that she (Marian) stood in no need of sympathising friends; that the desire for congenial society, as well as for books and larger opportunities for culture, which had led her to seek most eagerly a removal from Griff to a home near Coventry, had been met beyond her highest expectations."

Accounting for this change Miss Sibree laid most emphasis upon her friend's relations with the Brays. "On my saying to her once, as we closed their garden door together, that we seemed to be entering a Paradise, she said: 'I do indeed feel that I shut the world out when I shut that door.'"

It was to Mary Sibree that Marian confided later on

that she had, at Griff, sacrificed the cultivation of her intellect, and a proper regard to personal appearance. "I used"—Miss Sibree quotes her as saying —"to go about like an owl, to the great disgust of my brother; and I would have denied him what I see now to be quite lawful amusements." Which, perhaps, accounts in some degree for Isaac's support during Marian's difficulties with their father over church observance.

In this way the lonely, conscience-ridden, ugly duckling of the farm at Griff came at last to her own in the new home at Coventry. She had to labour and suffer and learn for many more years before she reached the real objective of her life—the abiding love of the man of her heart; but Coventry was the nursery of the sweetness of disposition, the unfailing sympathy for all souls in difficulty and stress, and the power of loving which made George Eliot so beloved by those who knew her best, and for this she owed a life-long debt to the Brays of Rosehill.

CHAPTER III

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

1846–49

THERE are few people who still maintain, as was almost universally the case in George Eliot's day, that by an immutable law of nature a woman cannot equal a man in creative power, but it is still believed by many that a woman who does, and who undergoes the mental training needed to enable her to apply her genius to practical affairs, must, perforce, to a large extent unsex herself.

This theory, though more reasonable, is as mistaken as the one of by-gone days. True, as women gain freedom of all kinds, the number who ape masculinity appear to increase in proportion, but the vast majority of these are foolish virgins. The women of first rank, whether in business, the professions, Art or Literature, are for the most part unassumingly but distinctively *women*.

George Eliot is a striking example, and in her case the roots went very deep, for with all her genius and learning she was only really happy in the intimacy of family life.

This cannot be said of her existence at Griff Farm

after she ceased to be a child, because it was too forlorn and too lonely an experience to be family life in the true sense. Her position at home at sixteen, upon her mother's death, was that of a manager and sometimes drudge, not the happy daughter of the house, and though, having an abnormal sense of duty and a never-sleeping conscience, she filled this part well, it brought her no happiness. No one was to blame. Her father and brother were absorbed in their business, and it never occurred to either to give the girl the sympathy which, though sorely needed, she was too proud to ask from them.

It was long after this, when Marian was twenty-seven, and when, through the Brays and her own ability and promise, she was coming into contact with distinguished literary people, that she first found her greatest happiness was at home.

Her father had fallen ill and as time went on became increasingly dependent upon his daughter until his death three years later. Three years is a long time, but during the whole of it, with only a short respite now and then for change of air, Marian was in sole charge. She was the old man's constant companion, and, when it became necessary, did all that a skilled nurse would undertake nowadays.

The first glimpse we have of her under this new responsibility is given by Mrs. Bray, who, in February, 1846, writes to Sara Hennell: "Poor

thing, I do pity her sometimes with her pale sickly face and dreadful headaches. Her father's illness has tried her so much, for all the time she had for rest and fresh air she had to read to him. Nevertheless, she looks very happy."

That is the point. She was really happy, which to those who did not know her as well as Mrs. Bray, was remarkable. If Mr. Evans had been a man of cultivated mind and literary tastes this might not have seemed so strange. But he was not. His ability, which was very great, had been mostly absorbed by his own business as a farmer and land-agent. He was, indeed, no ignoramus, and the books he liked were what we should call solid stuff, but they were not of the kind which interested his daughter; and of her own particular subject, Philosophy, he knew nothing at all, while religious discussion, of course, was taboo. Their only mutual interest, apart from family matters, was music. Nevertheless his company became more to Marian than anyone else's, and the sacrifice of pleasure, books, sustained work of her own, and as he grew worse, of the society of her dearest friends, was made without complaint. The explanation was very simple. The old man in his weakness now belonged to her. He was wholly dependent upon her, and Marian was so constituted that such dependence in one she truly loved made up for any losses.

She did not know until a few months before his death that the illness would have fatal results. He had been exceptionally strong and healthy all his life, and no one suspected (except his doctor) that from the first the malady was the beginning of the end. Again and again he rallied, and then she was sure he was getting well, and rejoiced accordingly. In the earlier stages, too, she was able to enjoy holidays, and her friends took care that these should be happy and invigorating; but even when this became impossible and her own health showed signs of giving way, and, physically, she became a constant sufferer, the happiness in caring for her father, and a loving contentment in the position it gave her in his affections, never left her.

Nine months after the illness began, and when it had already reached a trying stage, Mrs. Bray tells her sister, Sara, that Marian "looks very brilliant just now. We fancy she must be writing her novel."

She wasn't; she was making custards and beef-tea.

As time went on the aching flesh made the spirit weak at moments, but over this she took herself humorously to task.

"I seem to have removed to a distance from myself," she wrote to Miss Hennell a year later from the Isle of Wight, whither she had taken her

father for a change, "I am away from the petty circumstances that make up my ordinary environment. I can take myself up by the ears, and inspect myself like any other queer monster."

After two years, in April, 1848, on one of the occasions when she hoped all would be well, she writes to Miss Hennell: "Dear father is so decidedly progressing towards recovery that I am full of quiet joy—a gentle dawning light after the moonlight of sorrow. I have found already some of the 'sweet uses' that belong only to what is called Trouble, which is, after all, only a deepened gaze into life. I shall have less time than I have had at my own disposal; but I feel prepared to accept life, nay, lovingly to embrace it, in any form in which it shall present itself."

This temporary recovery, however, was but the sick man's last flash of return of former strength. By the following June the worst phases of the illness had begun. All hope had gone, and a deep depression seized upon the girl, with which came a certain impatience with life. Marian was not a meek saint.

"I have found it somewhat difficult to live for the last week," she wrote to Charles Bray, "conscious that all the time that the only additions to my lot worth having must be more strength to love in my own nature; but perhaps this consciousness has an irritating rather than a soothing effect."

Then she catches herself up: "I have a fit of sensitiveness upon me which, after all, is but egotism and mental idleness."

But her weariness was soon to break out again.

"Father makes not the slightest attempt to amuse himself, so that I scarcely feel easy in following my own bent for an hour. I have told you everything now, except that I look amiable in spite of a constant tendency to look black; and speak gently though with a strong propensity to be snappish. Pity me, ye happier spirits, that look amiable and speak gently because ye *are* amiable and gentle."

But this mood never lasted long. A fortnight later she was saying to Miss Hennell:

"I am entering upon a new period of my life, which makes me look back on the past as something incredibly poor and contemptible. My heart bleeds for dear father's pains, but it is blessed to be at hand to give the soothing word and act needed."

This spirit of gladness in the knowledge of her power to comfort grew stronger as time passed, even though she admits that her life is—"A perpetual nightmare and always haunted by something to be done which I never have the time, or rather the energy, to do."

On May 10, 1849, only three weeks before the end, she is writing to Mrs. Pears:

"I know it will gladden your heart to hear that father spoke of you the other day with affectionate gratitude. He remembers you as one who helped to strengthen that beautiful spirit of resignation which has never left him through his long trial. His mind is as clear and rational as ever, notwithstanding his feebleness now, and he gives me a thousand little proofs that he understands my affection and responds to it. These are very precious moments to me. My chair by father's bedside is a very blessed seat to me."

The strain upon Marian's health and spirits towards the last was nearly unbearable, but the intensity and power of unselfish love in her nature carried her through to the last. It was a terrible ordeal mentally and physically, but it set the seal of a very gracious womanhood upon her and was to have great influence over her life in after years.

The end came suddenly.

"Dear friends," she wrote to the Brays, "Dr. Bury told us last night that he thought father would not last till morning. I sat by him with my hand in his till four o'clock and he then became quieter and has had some comfortable sleep. My brother slept here last night and will be here again to-night."

Then comes a last bitter cry of desolation.

"What shall I do without my father? It will

seem as if a part of my moral nature were gone."

He died that night, and the brother and sister were alone together in the quiet house as they used to be in the old days, playing at Griff Farm as little children.

CHAPTER IV

INTERREGNUM

1849–54

GEORGE ELIOT, upon the death of her father in May, 1849, until a new existence opened before her in 1854, had no family life.

There were the Brays, of course. Rosehill, during all these hard years, was ever open to her. Had it been otherwise, she would have been one of the most lonely and miserable of women. But though these tried friends rose nobly to the occasion and, after taking her abroad and leaving her at Geneva to recruit her health, insisted, upon her return, that she should reside with them, which she gratefully consented to do for sixteen months, they could not provide a home for her. Anyone who has ever lived with married people, however kind and hospitable, will know why.

This, though a common fate for a woman of thirty, was a very hard one for Marian, whose nature craved, in a peculiar degree, for a home, and the dependence upon her of one whom she wholly loved.

A great deal has been written about George

Eliot's affection being like "ivy to the oak," in that she must always be clinging to somebody. This is at best a half-truth. While few women needed love more, not one ever gave stronger support to those she loved. The letters addressed to her, published in this volume, give ample proof that in her domestic circle she gave at least as much to her loved ones as they gave to her. In the larger issues of life her greatest need was not a person to lean upon, but of someone to lean upon her. As a girl in the management and household work at Griff, as a young woman at Coventry in the still greater responsibility of her father during his long illness, she showed that as a "bearer of burdens" she was a woman second to none.

Marian's need of love, however, went beyond anything that the affection of friends, or the dependence of her father, could provide. This we may gather from many confidences which appear in letters from the time she was twenty. The most poignant of these confidences was made to Miss Lewis in 1841.

"I have of late felt a depression that has made me alive to what is certainly a fact—that I am alone in the world. I do not mean to be so sinful as to say that I have not friends, most undeservedly kind and tender, and disposed to form a far too favourable estimate of me, but I mean that I have no one who enters into my pleasures or my griefs,

no one with whom I can pour out my soul, no one with the same yearnings, the same temptations, the same delights as myself."

This was written before she knew the Brays or the joy of her father's dependence five years later. But it is easily to be imagined what loneliness fell upon the bereaved girl at Mr. Evans's death.

Marian had no anticipation at this time that she would ever possess a lover. In this, as in all other matters concerning herself, she was distrustful to the last degree. In her day, far more than now, women of the middle class did not expect to marry unless they were comely or rich, and Marian was quite certain that she was the reverse of comely. Her features, she knew, were moulded on too large a scale for beauty; her figure was strongly built rather than slender, and the ravages of ill-health had made her complexion pallid and colourless.

Writing from Geneva on the insistence of a friend upon a re-arrangement of her hair, she remarked:

"All the world says I look infinitely better, though to myself I seem uglier than ever—if possible."

Another favourite belief of hers was that she was ageing fast.

"I am as haggard as an old witch," she declares at thirty-three.

A little later : " What a wretched lot of shrivelled old creatures we shall be by and bye."

Again : " This week I am a few degrees more wizened and muddle-headed than usual," and so forth.

Yet all the time this " grave lady," as a child visitor at the Geneva hotel called her, possessed charms of her own which, even when she was an elderly woman, made her beautiful to look upon. These have been described by those who knew her well, but the present writer is able to add corroborative evidence of another kind from an incident described by his sister, Mrs. Helen Allingham.

It was at Witley in the 'seventies. George Eliot had called to see Mrs. Allingham, to find that she was away. The children, however, were at home, and George Eliot's quick eye noticing wistful glances directed at her pony carriage, proposed a drive, with the nurse in the front seat. This woman, a shrewd country girl, and well aware who " Mrs. Lewes " was, hereafter became filled with pride at her experience, but she was awed as well.

" Do you know, ma'am," she said to Mrs. Allingham in a burst of confidence, " when I looked at the lady as we got in I thought to myself she was the ugliest I'd ever seen. But not when I got out ! She talked to me the same as if I were her friend, and as she talked never did I see such wonderful eyes, nor so sweet a smile, and her voice like an

organ—only it was low and gentle. She was beautiful then. I'll not forget the light in her face as long as I live."

George Eliot at that time was over fifty. What must her face have been like among her friends when roused to enthusiasm and eager interest, as it could easily be, twenty years before? We know from what so many of these friends have said that this beauty came from her exceptional power of giving sympathy to others. Their sex, station, or degree mattered nothing. If they needed sympathy, or she wished to arouse their interest in what she was feeling or thinking at the time, there were few indeed who could withstand her charm.

The overstrain of nursing her father having seriously affected Marian's health, a complete rest of body and change of scene were imperative. These she obtained at Geneva, where she remained nine months. Here, at an hotel, alone for the first time in her life, she made friends at once. Afterwards M. and Mme. d'Albert, to whom she went as a paying guest, fell in love with her, and she formed an intimate friendship with them which lasted her life. This, for a person "prematurely old, haggard, wizened and ugly," might appear to be something of an achievement. The real truth, however, was that Marian was felt by these friends, and others, to be young for her years, in spite of her brain development. Her purgatory at Griff

once over, she had renewed her girlhood in the sunshine of Rosehill. Later, her father's need and deepened love gave her full womanhood. But she was still without knowledge of the world. She had been brought up under strict conventions and had no conception of the way those cobwebs were swept aside in literary and artistic circles even of that day.

This life, with all that it could mean at this impressionable stage of her growth, came to Marian in 1851. In January of that year an article of hers on Mackay's " Progress of the Intellect " appeared in the *Westminster Review*, a monthly journal of high literary standing. The proprietor and editor, Mr. Chapman, who was afterwards a publisher of some distinction, had already met Marian at the Brays', and was impressed at once by her wide knowledge and firm grasp of philosophical subjects. More especially, it would seem, he was attracted to her as an individual and a woman. Proposals were made to her to become sub-editor of the *Review*, arrange a catalogue of Mr. Chapman's works on Philosophy, and live with him and his wife at a house in the Strand. George Eliot did not consent at once. She went there for a visit first, and then returned to the Brays. But money had to be earned, for she had only a very small income of her own, and she was eager to enter the world of letters to which she rightly belonged. So in September, 1851, she made the plunge and from that time until

July, 1854, London was her place of residence and her chief friends were men and women of the first rank in literature. But she was alone—very much alone—in the midst of it all. Chapman's house at 142, Strand, was a meeting place where on Monday evenings came Thackeray, Dickens, Carlyle, Froude, Emerson, Harriet Martineau, Mark Pattison, Bulwer Lytton and Leigh Hunt, Herbert Spencer and George Henry Lewes, and many others.

With many of these Marian made friendships. Several contributed to the *Review*—Grote, Carlyle, Herbert Spencer, George Henry Lewes and Harriet Martineau being among that number. It was a tremendous plunge for this country girl. The life she had to live was most laborious; the work of editing the *Review* difficult, and of great responsibility. Chapman shared it, but the burden lay principally on Marian's shoulders. All day she was reading, selecting, and often seeking for articles for the *Westminster;* reviewing books, generally of the stodgiest description; correcting never-ending proofs, and even writing, herself, articles for her journal, and others, upon all sorts of subjects. In the evenings she discussed these subjects with her new friends, together with the philosophy of life. And from the exigencies of the situation, most of these friends were men.

The letters Marian wrote to Miss Hennell and the old loves at Coventry show, as we should expect,

that it was a thrilling experience, but one which was often very wearisome and which finally wore her out. The intellectual side of her was stimulated ; the one-time hunger for intimate social intercourse with men of brains, knowledge and broad views was satisfied to the full, but there was no rest, no home life. Nothing but work and excitement.

Among George Eliot's friends during the first year in London, the most intimate was Herbert Spencer, the philosopher. Of this friendship her latest biographer, Miss Elizabeth S. Haldane, who would appear to have gone deeply into the matter, gives many interesting particulars. Some are drawn from George Eliot's letters to the Brays, to whom the girl wrote openly about her " excellent new friend," and many come from Spencer's own Autobiography.

This friendship was a very close one. It came before George Eliot met Mr. George Henry Lewes, and was her first intimate association with a single, unattached man. Spencer, we gather, was a person of cold temperament and ultra-critical habit of mind, but he became very much attracted.

" I am frequently at Chapman's," he wrote, " and the greatness of her (George Eliot's) intellect conjoined with her womanly qualities and manner generally keep me at her side most of the evening."

And that was only the beginning of things. Spencer sent Marian theatre tickets *ad lib.*, and took her to concerts more often than anyone else. They went daily walks at his invitation and sang much together. He so comported himself indeed, that even in their own unconventional set reports were rife that something was going to happen. Spencer, however, contradicted these reports, informing all and sundry that his mind and George Eliot's were "set on things higher than love in its concrete form." Then he seems to have sheered off.

When, after George Eliot's death, someone wrote that he had been one of her suitors he wanted to deny it publicly, but a friend told him that he "would be eternally damned if he did." So he let it alone.

The man, Miss Haldane tells us, "did not with all his perspicacity realise that he was playing with fire; that is with a passionate woman ready to burst out on the smallest provocation."

We wonder!

George Eliot herself, so Miss Haldane informs us, did in fact fall in love with Spencer. It is very probable. A woman with her pride and delicacy of mind and respect for conventions would never have allowed any man to see as much of her, or, in those censorious days, have entrusted herself to his sole company so frequently unless she felt that

she had a right to expect, and she had every right, that he was in earnest, and really felt what he appeared to feel. That she was mistaken, and so, for a period, gave more than she received, is no discredit to her.

The matter indeed was only of passing importance. When Herbert Spencer cooled, Marian uttered no protest, we gather, though she must have suffered severely at times. The masculine mind, of course, wishes that a useful elder brother had been at hand to perform the grateful duty of kicking that serene philosopher heartily and well. We say this without prejudice. Spencer may have meant no evil, but he sorely needed a lesson in manhood which a hob-nailed boot would have taught him.

The story ended well. By a sort of poetical justice Spencer himself introduced to Marian, Mr. George Henry Lewes, who though he was also a philosopher, happened, unlike Spencer, to be a man as well. Ultimately, to the credit of both, a true and balanced friendship between Spencer and George Eliot took the place of the first unequal one. Spencer was a frequent visitor after George Eliot's union with Mr. Lewes, and the two remained, as Miss Haldane assures us, " close friends to the last."

The influence, however, of such an experience upon a sensitive woman living entirely alone cannot be measured. If, as we cannot doubt, she had always longed for love in its highest and most

complete form, how much greater must have been her need when she was bereft of the hope which Spencer, consciously or unconsciously, planted in her heart, and had to take up life anew in all its dreary loneliness.

CHAPTER V

HAPPINESS

GEORGE ELIOT first saw Mr. George Henry Lewes, to whom she was to give the best part of her life, soon after she went to live with the Chapmans in 1851, but for more than a year it was a purely casual acquaintance. She did not like him much to begin with. She thought him to be a man of light, quick mind; clever indeed, and immensely well-informed; a writer of almost every kind of literature from philosophy and science to popular novels; but essentially one who laughed and made merry when gravity would have been more becoming; who reverenced nothing; expressed his opinions on all subjects and at all times with startling frankness and whose chief object in life appeared to be to create frolic and gaiety upon all social occasions.

In person he was small and slight, his face was marked with small-pox; he wore his hair longer than most men did, even at that time, and had little regard of his personal appearance. He possessed, however, a sensitive mouth, and eyes of remarkable beauty and expression.

Such was Mr. Lewes as George Eliot saw him when they first met. He was a contributor to the *Westminster Review* and the Literary Editor of the *Leader*—a weekly journal on the lines of the *Spectator*, and was often to be seen at Mr. Chapman's receptions. But it was a long time before Marian knew the real man, for, being an accomplished actor, Mr. Lewes persisted in pretending a light-hearted irresponsibility towards life. In reality it was a very serious thing to him, and he was living under hard, sad circumstances. His wife, not long before, had betrayed him with his dearest friend, and he was bringing up three boys out of an uncertain income. George Eliot, of course, had no knowledge of this. She saw only the froth on the surface. But Mr. Lewes admired her greatly and by and bye their friendship grew closer. He began by haunting the *Westminster* editorial chambers at all sorts of odd hours.

"And when I had sat down again," she writes to the Brays once, in 1852, "thinking I had two clear hours before dinner, rap at the door—Mr. Lewes, who of course sits talking till the second bell rings!"

It was not often, however, that he was mentioned in her letters, nothing like as intimately—even when in 1853 they were beginning to see a great deal of one another—as Herbert Spencer two years before. A significant sign, perhaps. But there are milestones

on the road. In March, 1853, we hear that she "had a pleasant evening—Lewes as usual genial and amusing. He has quite won my liking in spite of myself." In April she writes: "People are very good to me. Mr. Lewes especially is kind and attentive, and has quite won my regard, after having had a good deal of my vituperation. Like a few other people in the world, he is better than he seems. A man of heart and conscience, wearing a mask of flippancy."

She knew him now, and the ice was breaking up. But how different were her allusions to him from those of two years previously to Herbert Spencer, whose friendship, she declared to the Brays, as an enthusiastic girl would: "is my brightest spot, next to my beloved *old* friends."

This second friendship was made by a woman of full maturity, who would thoroughly prove and try a man—and herself—before she gave way to any raptures. Nevertheless, all through 1853, and in the early months of 1854, their intimacy was ripening fast. No data exist by which we can know when she became aware that she loved him. In November, 1853, she told Chapman she wished to give up her post on the *Review;* she had already cut herself loose from 142, Strand, and taken up her abode in rooms at 21, Cambridge Street, Hyde Park. How much this had to do with future plans we do not

know, but friends who perhaps did know think it had a great deal.

It is, however, known now that George Eliot's decision to give up her life to Mr. Lewes was not taken until every aspect of the most difficult and painful situation had been considered by them both. Mr. Lewes had his three boys for whom he must provide, and, in addition, felt it his duty, in which Marian fully concurred, to continue to assist his wife, who was in a more or less destitute condition ; though, owing to her action, all connection with her of every other kind had ceased for two years past.

George Eliot, on her side, knew that she must risk losing her friends, even those dearest of all at Rosehill.

All these problems were squarely faced and laid in the balance. Another fact which has not been recorded we also know now. Before George Eliot made her choice she sought out Mrs. Lewes and asked her whether there was the least chance of her returning to her husband. What this must have cost the sensitive Marian only a woman in her circumstances can understand ; but it was extremely characteristic.

Mrs. Lewes replied in a most convincing manner that under no circumstances did she wish to have anything more to do with the man she had wronged and whose help she was even then accepting.

That settled it. Probably personal contact with

this woman did more than anything else to decide George Eliot to take the final step. In the then state of the law a divorce was impossible, and she hesitated no longer.

She gave up the sub-editorship of the *Westminster Review* in April, 1854. In May she tells Charles Bray, "It is quite possible I may wish to go abroad to the continent, or twenty other things." In June she informs Mrs. Bray in reply to an invitation to go to Rosehill: "I see no probability of my being able to be with you before your other Midsummer visitors arrive," and tells her that Mr. Lewes has been ill, but has just returned to town. On the 10th July (was it by chance only?) she makes the following dry comment on Herbert Spencer: "He will stand in the Biographical Dictionaries of 1854 as 'an original and profound philosophical writer—whose life, like that of the great Kant, offers little material for the narrator.'" (!)

Then, ten days later, comes the last and often-quoted note to the Brays:

"DEAR FRIENDS—ALL THREE:

I have only time to say good-bye and God bless you. Poste Restante, Weimar, for the next six weeks, and afterwards Berlin.

Ever your loving and grateful

MARIAN."

How far, either in letters which have not been published, or in other ways, George Eliot prepared those she loved best for the shock of her action we do not know. That it was a terrible shock, not to the Brays only, but to friends everywhere, was of course inevitable. George Eliot, wisely enough, said little and wrote less about the matter. She sent one letter to Mrs. Bray fourteen months after the event, but no others in defence of her decision have been published. This letter contains a carefully framed and reasoned justification for what she did. It has been largely quoted by biographers, and only two sentences need be given here.

" If there is one action or relation of my life which is and always has been profoundly serious, it is my relation to Mr. Lewes " ; and " Light and easily broken ties are what I neither desire theoretically nor could live for practically. Women who are satisfied with such ties do *not* act as I have done."

There was nothing further to say. As the years went by the happiness of her union with Mr. Lewes grew to be her most precious possession. She knew that her motives were pure, and was certain from the first that time would prove that no union of hearts and lives made under legal pact was ever more sacred and complete.

Time did prove this ; the permanent devotion of these two to one another, their loving, entirely happy domestic life, the gratitude of George Henry

Lewes's sons for the love and care of their " dearest little Mütterchen " throughout the succeeding five-and-twenty happy years, were surely her justification.

Opinion upon this matter did then, and ever will, differ fundamentally, according to the point of view as to what constitutes real marriage.

The present writer, without advancing any opinion upon the general principle involved, has personal knowledge that women of unimpeachable reputation who knew most about the affair, believed, even at the time, that George Eliot did right. My mother attended a private meeting of women friends convened by Miss Harriet Martineau to discuss the question. Many present were very severe, but my mother came away convinced, with others, that George Eliot's action was justified ; and she always maintained that view to the end of her life.

This was not, however, the attitude of Marian's nearest of kin, nor of many friends, and she suffered much heartache in consequence. But we cannot find evidence, though it has been so stated, that this sorrow affected in any serious way her profound and settled happiness and the contentment of soul brought about by her life with Mr. Lewes.

They had a hard enough time at first. So great was their poverty that they both had to write in one room, and as Mr. Lewes was addicted to a quill pen there was a constant scratching of paper which drove his nervous, highly-strung companion nearly

frantic at times. Let it not be forgotten that this poverty was not caused by lack of means to support themselves alone. The boys were growing expensive, as boys do when education become simperative and, in addition, the allowance to Mrs. Lewes was kept up as before. George Eliot, moreover, had poor relatives of her own to help, and all she could spare was given to them. But this mutual self-sacrifice only drew the two closer together and their love shone the brighter for it all.

As time passed a union of mind, rare in the case of two people whose brains moved upon very different lines, grew up between them. Mr. Lewes, naturally a critic of peculiar insight, began to perceive that though Marian was a profound thinker upon philosophical subjects, and a brilliant essayist, she possessed greater powers still, and the time came when he definitely, though very tentatively at first, suggested that she might become an imaginative writer of distinction.

The idea itself was not new. Herbert Spencer, it appears, broached it once, and George Eliot says of herself: "It had always been a vague dream of mine to write a novel." But nothing had ever come of it. Unlike so many writers great or small—generally small—she had no secret drawer or portfolio of early romances to look over when the day came for a real trial of her qualifications for such work. All she ever did was to write an "Intro-

ductory chapter describing a Staffordshire village, and the life of neighbouring farm-houses." Then, as usual, she says: "I lost any hope that I should ever be able to write a novel, just as I desponded about everything else in my future life."

It was this despondency which Mr. Lewes had to remove. It was not an easy task.

Writers on this matter have described the incident, which in 1856, two years after the union, caused George Eliot seriously to set herself to write a story, as if it were a sort of chance circumstance. George Eliot appears to do so herself, for she tells how she "happened" to have the MS. of this "Introductory Chapter" among some papers which she took with her to Germany, and how one evening in Berlin "something led her to read it to George." "He was struck by it," she continues, and "suggested the possibility of my being able to write a novel, though he distrusted—indeed disbelieved in—my possession of any dramatic power." Then she goes on to tell how, as she went on with "other kinds of writing," Mr. Lewes's conviction that a novel must be attempted grew more pronounced. "You *must* try to write a story," he said. Yet, until she had taken hold and actually written part of "Amos Barton," the first of "The Scenes of Clerical Life" and read it aloud to him, he expressed no decided opinion that she had more than power of description and was able to write good humorous dialogue.

At that reading, indeed, he gave in. They cried together over the pathos of the scene of Milly's death, and he kissed her, saying: "I think your pathos is better than your fun," and when the story was finished he sent it to Blackwood with unhesitating praise.

It is clear from this account that Mr. Lewes was no indiscriminating admirer at first, and that he did not spread butter thickly, but only gave just enough encouragement to prevent George Eliot from throwing the effort up until she had given it fair trial. What, therefore was it which made Marian, the sensitive and self-distrustful, persevere steadily at last to create her first original work? We believe that it was no sudden fancy or ambition to try something new at the instigation of Mr. Lewes, but because she had become a different woman altogether; because the old loneliness of life had left her; because all her work, as well as her play, had been shared for two years by one who ever drew out by his criticism, as much as by his sympathy, all that she had to give. Therefore as time passed she gave more and more, until at last she produced her best work.

Where Herbert Spencer, when he was a lover, had failed, George Henry Lewes, her husband in the truest sense, succeeded, because, by years of sympathy and devotion he had planted in her heart the spark which set fire to her genius—which was

not a matter of brains only, but of her whole nature.

The history of the swift rise to fame of George Eliot's first book has been told too often for it to be repeated in detail here. Blackwood, totally unconscious of the identity of the author of "Amos Barton," seized upon it, his only condition being that it should be one of a series. This followed, and the Stories of Clerical Life appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* immediately. The writer of the "Scenes" had to invent a name for herself, and "George Eliot" was chosen, because, she says: "Mr. Lewes's own name was George, and the other was a good, mouth-filling, easily pronounced word."

The success of the "Scenes of Clerical Life" opened out a new and much happier existence for its author and Mr. Lewes.

The voluminous correspondence which came in from delighted readers, and an equally delighted publisher, were extremely cheerful reading. Henceforth, also, we find interchange of letters with Miss Sara Hennell, Mary Sibree, now Mrs. Cash, and other dear friends of the olden time, including Mrs. Bray. Old wounds were healed, or healing fast. "Herbert Spencer dined with us the other day—looks well, and is brimful of clever talk, as usual." This in November, 1857.

But it was not her own success George Eliot enjoyed most.

GEORGE ELIOT.

"It is a great happiness to me," she writes to Miss Sara Hennell, "that Mr. Lewes gets more and more the recognition he deserves."

We shall see by her letters to his sons how much this became to her. Christmas Day that year the two spent alone together—"We ate our turkey in a happy solitude *à deux*."

In her journal at the end of December, 1857, she writes:

"My life has deepened unspeakably during the last year: I feel a greater capacity for moral and intellectual enjoyment; a more acute sense of my many deficiencies in the past; a more solemn desire to be faithful to coming duties than I remember at any former period of my life. And my happiness has deepened too; the blessedness of a perfect love and union grows daily. Few women, I fear, have had such reason as I have to think the long sad years of youth were worth living for the sake of middle age. May I be able to look back upon 1858 with an equal consciousness of advancement in work and in heart."

Her ship was coming in at last. The troubles of the long sad years were over. In her home; in the work she was yet to do; and most of all in the society of her life's companion and his boys, she was now to know great happiness for many prosperous years.

CHAPTER VI

THE HARVEST

THE value of George Eliot's work has been appraised and commented upon so lavishly, and by such a host of eminent essayists and biographers, that a chronicler of her family life is inclined to leave the whole subject out of the picture. But as these commentaries have been written from the point of view of the commentators, and the views of the writer herself, which are of interest, usually left out of account, and, in certain cases, misinterpreted,—while the circumstances under which the books were written have sometimes been disregarded altogether—there would appear to be room for some brief allusion to the matter. Furthermore, the writings of George Eliot, the author, were part and parcel of the domestic life of Marian, the woman.

The point which it is most important to bear in mind where George Eliot's personal attitude toward her work is concerned is that from first to last, while George Henry Lewes lived, even in later years when publishers were offering large sums of money in advance for anything George Eliot might choose to write, she undertook nothing until she had fully

discussed her ideas with him. Then, as they took shape and she began to write—whether it were the synopsis of a plot or the story or poem itself—every word put on paper was read aloud, and his comments, criticisms and suggestions invited and usually accepted, even though, as in the case of the " Spanish Gypsy," this resulted in the work being laid aside for reconsideration.

This does not mean that there was any literary collaboration between them. No author ever possessed a stronger individuality as an artist than George Eliot. Her ideas, and their expression, down to the minutest detail, when they appeared before the world, were her own. But as any author will understand who has pursued the practice of passing his creative work from inception to completion through the mind of another on whose intuitive sympathy he may always count, and for whose judgment he has the highest regard, by the time that work is finished there is a feeling of finality about it which tends to blunt the effect of any criticism thereafter made by others.

George Eliot certainly did not suffer gladly the bulk of the comments, whether adverse or laudatory, upon her books, or with the meekness which many of the commentators, being persons of weight in the literary world, felt they deserved. She was, indeed, very caustic on the subject of " uninformed criticism " by the most respectable authorities, and made

severe strictures upon reviewers as a class, even when they were acclaiming her novels to be works of great genius, and she was compared favourably with Walter Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, and the other giants of her day.

This attitude of hers has since been put down to rigidity of mind: a narrow and provincial outlook upon life; self-sufficient complacency, and even to a fatuous worship of her literary children. The reverse was the case. George Eliot's estimate of her worth was very modest and reserved.

Success, fame, the adulation of sincere but not too well-balanced admirers all over the world, and the admiration of an immense circle of personal friends and acquaintances never changed George Eliot's own estimate of her work.

In January, 1858, when the "Scenes of Clerical Life" had just been published, she described how Mr. Lewes had rushed home to say: "I have some very pretty news for you—something in my pocket," and had produced a favourable review in *The Times* which had made him "quite agitated and tremulous," and how next day he went into town and brought back "some pleasant scraps of admiration" and quoted an authority as saying that this George Eliot "was a great writer." Then she makes this entry in her journal:

"I wonder how I shall feel about these little details in ten years' time, if I am alive. At present

I value them as grounds for hoping that my writing may succeed, and so give value to my life: as indications that I can touch the hearts of my fellow-men and so sprinkle some precious grain as the result of the long years in which I have been inert and suffering. But at present fear and trembling still predominate over hope."

When, in February, 1859, "*Bedesman*," as Blackwood the publisher called it, "was coming in a winner," she writes to him: "It is a wretched weakness of my nature to be so strongly affected by damnatory praise from ignorant journalists, and yet how hard it is to put one's best heart and soul into a book and be hardened to the result—be indifferent to the proof whether or not one has really a vocation to speak to one's fellow men in that way? Of course one's vanity is at work, but the main anxiety is something entirely distinct from vanity."

In July, 1860, over 16,000 copies of "Adam Bede" had been sold—a great number in those days—and "The Mill on the Floss" was so much sought after that an edition of 6,000 sold out before another could be printed. That month she received through Blackwood a letter from Bulwer Lytton taking the book to task in many ways. She replied as follows:

"I have read Sir Edward's critical letter with much interest. On two points I recognise the justice of his criticism. First, that Maggie is made to appear too passive in the scene of the quarrel

in the Red Deeps. If my book were still in MS. I should—now that the defect is suggested to me—alter, or rather expand that scene. Secondly, that the tragedy (the death of Maggie and Tom at the end) is not adequately prepared. This is a defect which I felt even when writing the third volume and have felt ever since the MS. left me. The *Epische Breite* into which I was beguiled by love of my subject in the first two volumes, caused a want of proportionate fullness in the treatment of the third, which I shall always regret."

After disputing other criticism she concluded: "I hope you will thank Sir Edward on my behalf for the trouble he has taken to put his criticism into a form specific enough to be useful. If printed criticisms were usually written with only half the same warrant of knowledge, and with an equal sincerity of intention, I should read them without fear of fruitless annoyance."

There is no rigidity here; no dislike, but even gratitude, for truth-telling, and frank acknowledgment of "defects."

In 1861, when "Silas Marner" was added to the list and was selling in thousands, she writes to Blackwood upon an article written on "The Mill on the Floss": "I cannot, of course, agree with the writer in all his regrets; if I could have done so I should not have written the book I did write, but quite another. Still it is a comfort to me to read

any criticism which recognises the high responsibilities of literature that undertakes to express life. The ordinary tone about one is that the artist may do what he will, provided he pleases the public."

From Florence in 1861 " industriously foraging in old streets and old books," preparing for " Romola," and her former works ever increasing in popularity, she expresses doubts whether the new conception will ever come to fruition because: " I will never write anything to which my whole heart, mind and conscience don't consent, so that I may feel that it was something—however small—which wanted to be done in this world, and that I am just the organ for that small bit of work."

These doubts about " Romola " grew into nightmares which were not removed by a contract with Smith, Elder, in May, 1862, to give her £7,000 for the publication of the novel in the *Cornhill*. In July she wrote: " A dreadful palsy has beset me for the last few days. I have scarcely made any progress, yet I have been very well in body." In December: " I am extremely spiritless, dead and hopeless about my writing." Then: " I read aloud what I had written to George, and he, to my surprise, entirely approved of it."

The book was finished in the summer of 1863. On May 16th she wrote: " Finished Part 13. Killed Tito in great excitement ! " and on June 9th: " Put the last stroke to ' Romola.' *Ebenezer !* "

The labour and effort expended by George Eliot in writing this book surpassed, it has often been said, anything else she ever attempted. Before she had done more than conceive the plot she read thirty-nine books, including a study of Roman Law in the Middle Ages, a History of Modern Philosophy, Gibbon on Greek Learning, and Craik's History of English Literature. Her study of Italian was so intense that she told Mrs. Charles Lewes one of her chief difficulties was that all her characters : " would talk Italian to her, and that it was like making a translation at the same time that she was composing conversation." Years afterwards she said to Mr. Cross that she began the book a young woman and finished it an old one. Yet when replying to a criticism and an appreciation of the book by Mr. A. H. Hutton, editor of the *Spectator,* she sums up her own estimate of the result in these words :

" My predominant feeling is not that I have achieved anything, but—that great, great facts have struggled to find a voice through me and have only been able to speak brokenly."

The child is the father of the man—in elemental things. Even as George Eliot had burst into violent sobbing at twelve years old, when over-applauded by the parents of Miss Franklin's schoolchildren, so at forty and to the end of her life she loathed over-praise of her novels. But she hated them to

be unjustly criticised, and while yearning for everybody, high and low, learned and unlearned, gentle and simple, to understand them, she yet was only entirely satisfied when that appreciation was "discriminating." Truly one hard to please! But as she says again and again of herself when freely admitting her own unreasonableness, how can a person conquer her own nature? She was born passionate and eager, exacting, yet constantly longing for sympathy; and because of this and her great intellect she accomplished what she did, and was loved by all who discovered the woman under the cloak of her reserve. That she was fastidious and oversensitive is not to be denied, but she enjoyed spontaneous praise from any quarter with the simplicity of a child, and when it came unexpectedly from persons she revered she was transported to the seventh heaven of delight.

"There can hardly be any climax of approbation for me after this," she wrote to Blackwood over a letter from Charles Dickens, addressed to the author of "The Scenes of Clerical Life"—whose identity had not then been revealed. Dickens wrote: "I have been so strongly affected by the two first tales that I hope you will excuse my writing to you to express my admiration of their extraordinary merit. The exquisite truth and delicacy, both of the humour and the pathos, I have never seen the like of; and they have impressed me in a manner I should find it

very difficult to describe to you, if I had the impertinence to try."

After expressing his opinion that the writer of the "Scenes" was a woman, he concluded: "If it should ever suit your convenience and inclination to show me the face of the man or woman who has written so charmingly, it will be a very memorable occasion to me. If otherwise, I shall always hold that impalpable personage in loving attachment and respect, and shall yield myself up to all future utterances from the same source, with a perfect confidence in their making me wiser and better."

George Eliot took great pleasure also in a saucy note from Mrs. Gaskell.

"I am suspected of having written 'Adam Bede.' I have hitherto denied it; but really I think that as you want to keep your real name a secret, it would be very pleasant for me to blush acquiescence. Will you give me leave?"

Sharp comment is made, however, because Mrs. Gaskell spelt "George Eliot" wrongly; and when an admirer suggested that Mrs. Poyser's dialogue was largely composed not of original sayings but remembered proverbs, George Eliot boiled over.

Mr. Lewes at this time was an assiduous collector of good news: Mrs. Poyser had been quoted in Parliament by Mr. Charles Buxton "as the farmer's wife says in 'Adam Bede'—'it wants to be hatched over again, and hatched different!'"

Charles Reade had told him "Adam" was "the finest thing since Shakespeare"; and John Murray said there had never been such a book.

All these titbits Marian treasured and entered in her journal as a mother treasures her baby's curls. The effect of her books upon her friends gave her infinite happiness. Writing to Madame Bodichon in 1859—"full of joy in my success" ("Adam Bede"), she says: "God bless you, dearest Barbara, for your love and sympathy. I have had no time for exultation—and I have thought more of the future and the much work that remains in life than of anything that has been achieved. But I think your letter to-day gave me more joy—more heart-glow—than all the letters and reviews and other testimonies of success that have come to me since the evenings when I read aloud my manuscript to my dear, dear husband, and he laughed and cried alternately, and then rushed to me to kiss me."

To Mrs. Bray the same year: "The things you tell me are just such as I need to know—I mean about the help my book is to the people who read it. I had quite an *enthusiastic* letter from Herbert Spencer the other day about 'Adam Bede.' He says he feels the better for reading it—really words to be treasured up!"

One difficulty inherent to the subject-matter of such a book as "Adam Bede," the *personnel* of which were mostly farming and labouring folk of

the Midlands, was the inveterate belief of a great number of people that its principal characters were portraits of real persons, and most of these her own relations. Adam Bede was her father ; Mrs. Poyser her mother ; Dinah Morris her Aunt Elizabeth, and so on. Even after she had categorically explained that this was not the case and why, the fiction was maintained, and biographers have emphatically expressed their opinion at the present day that though she thought she didn't she really did, and that her denial was a self-delusion ! The matter, after all these years is not, perhaps, of much intrinsic importance, but as nothing can justify a writer in doing such a thing, and as George Eliot felt this very strongly, it is only fair that her own words should be quoted.

" There are things in ' Adam Bede ' about my father," she told Miss Sara Hennell—" (*i.e.*, being interpreted, things that my father told us about his early life) not ' portrait ' of my father. There is not a single portrait in the book, nor will there be in any future book of mine."

Her aunt, she says elsewhere, was in all respects the antithesis of Dinah Morris both in appearance, character, and her " mode of preaching." As in the case of her father, George Eliot had simply borrowed an incident in her aunt's life—a visit she paid to a girl who had murdered her child and been condemned to death. This incident was the germ

of the novel, and the woman-preacher became the heroine of the book; but she was *not* "Aunt Samuel." The "things about her father," however, in his early life included the chief episode of "Adam Bede"—the affair between Arthur Donnithorne and Hetty—and which concerned a family for which Mr. Evans had been land agent; while her mother, we gather, was known to her relatives to have wit and a sharp tongue. It was not unreasonable, therefore, that there should be much humming in the home hive when the book came out. But allusion to incidents which happened to your father and your aunt is one thing; drawing their portraits quite another; while as for Mrs. Poyser being anybody but Mrs. Poyser, such a suggestion, as Cromwell would have said, is "a fantastical thing."

Mrs. Poyser has ever been a great stumbling block to those biographers with a fixed conviction that George Eliot had no humour and determined to prove it like a proposition in Euclid.

But while the absurdity of this assertion in the face of her creation, not of Mrs. Poyser only, but a gallery of delightful humorists, is sufficiently manifest, the perpetrators of the myth may be comforted to know that George Eliot herself was of their own opinion.

"I have no fun in me," she told Mrs. Allingham once apologetically, drawing her away from a room where lively young people were chaffing each other.

" How can you say so ? " was the blunt rejoinder. " Think of Mrs. Poyser ! "

George Eliot smiled a gentle but superior smile :

" My dear, that has nothing to do with me. I only put down what Mrs. Poyser said."

And she meant it ; but it was not true, for, as she remarks in a letter to a friend : " Every word of Mrs. Poyser's came from my own mind." Moreover, she loved Mrs. Poyser herself, and her dialogue, which proved her enjoyment of fun.

" I am very sorry to part with her," she wrote to Blackwood when the book was finished. " Even in an imaginary world there is the sorrow of parting."

No one has ever denied that George Eliot was an earnest and most conscientious artist. Unless the spirit moved her spontaneously to write, nothing would induce her to begin a book, no matter how glittering was the " commission " offered her by eager and enterprising publishers. But she counted up very carefully the proceeds of her handiwork, and she was very thankful as these grew larger and larger. It is still the fashion among those who do not write to believe, or affect to believe, that literary or artistic genius stands for reckless expenditure, and in general leads its possessor to the bankruptcy court —though the position of our modern Princes of Grub Street has somewhat exploded that fallacy. But George Eliot at least, though only a poor Victorian, was a shining example to the contrary.

One of Mr. Lewes's grand-daughters writes that she has in her possession to-day "a beautifully neat little notebook of 1872, containing lists in violet ink written in George Eliot's delightful, small, but clear handwriting, of The Priory stocks of china, glass, silver and electro-plate, and of the blankets and linen at The Heights. In this book there are also records of minute details as to the number of books sold; *e.g.*, 'Middlemarch' up to Christmas, 1878, sold 30,959 copies. In 1879, 2,800 copies; and accurate accounts of the money her books made from 1855. Thus, for example—Articles for the *Westminster Review* (1863) £119 8*s.*; 'Romola,' (1866) £7,000; 'Felix Holt' (1868), £6,000; 'The Poems' (1868), £750; in 1869, £300. Similar accounts were kept down to 1880, the year of her death. Her investments were all carefully noted, together with estimated expenditure. These records show," the writer continues, "that she was most generous and supported many relatives not her own, including the wife of George Henry Lewes and her daughters."

This generosity to others was one of Marian's most endearing qualities. It expanded with her income, whereas her mode of living always remained simple and economical. She kept no carriage when she was in London until the last year of all, though often requiring one owing to her feeble health. Her equipage at The Heights, Witley, was a pony chaise.

The wide range of people who loved her books not only during her lifetime but for more than a generation after her death would be very surprising to the public of to-day. The writer, whose experience is by no means singular, read "Adam Bede," "Silas Marner" and "The Mill on the Floss" before he was sixteen years old as a matter of course.

More than ten years later (1889) he had an interesting experience. There had been established in Hoxton, under the presidency of Walter Besant, a lending library, the members of which were working people. They chose all the books, a list of which was sent to their Vice-President, Mr. George A. Macmillan, who, a generous donor himself, procured the balance as gifts from other London publishers. One evening a workgirl, a tie-maker earning ten shillings a week, who had lately joined the library for the sole purpose of being able to get out, at a penny a week, the latest works of "Ouida" and Miss Braddon, demanded a book by some other author. "I don't know none," she said. "Bar those I've read; I buy penny novelettes. Choose me one."

This was against all rules; but what are rules for except to be broken in an emergency? A book was taken from the shelves and handed to her without remark. The girl returned with it in a week. "I've read every word," she said delightedly.

" Give us another by the same. I do like that man's books."

It was " Adam Bede."

A few years later when a statistical table was drawn up to find out the volumes most sought after by the members it was found that with the men " Westward Ho ! " took the first place, but with the women " The Mill on the Floss."

How George Eliot would have rejoiced at the triumph of her " Maggie." No one knew better than she that one of the greatest tests of artistry in pictures, music, or books is the appeal it makes to untrained but eager minds. They seize unerringly upon all that is unaffected, sincere and of high purpose. They may like glitter, but they know the worth of gold. The " precious grain " which was sown by " The Scenes of Clerical Life " brought a great harvest.

CHAPTER VII

LETTERS OF GEORGE ELIOT, GEORGE HENRY LEWES, CHARLES AND THORNTON LEWES

1859–1878

HOFWYL.

July 4, 1859.

From Charles Lee Lewes (eldest son of G. H. Lewes) at school in Hofwyl, Switzerland.

DEAR MOTHER,

Thank you very much for the watch which you sent me by Father. It was a great surprise to me, for I didn't think of getting a watch when he told me I should get some substantial advantage in getting on so well. Father thinks of bringing you over with him next year which I think you'll like uncommonly, only I shan't be here to see you enjoy our beautiful scenery. I am glad Father did not stop to see the shooting, for it was nothing in comparison with last year. Tell Father it was his friend Dr. Stamm who conducted it, and I think he would have done far better to have let the same master conduct it who conducted it last year. Only then it would have fallen on to-day, and to-day it's pouring.

Mr. Thomas brought me last Tuesday the Sonata in E flat of Beethoven, Opus 7. Do you play it?

I have learnt the first three pages already by heart. It's not as difficult as the one I played before, and which I unfortunately hadn't by me when Father was here.

I got no prize this year at the shooting for I always came in when the cross bow went wrong. The cross bow was very *launisch* this year ; for some time it would carry very straight and then all at once it would get weak and carry differently each time. Last year I had much better luck for I shot down two prizes. Empson shot the first prize for one of the masters. The master gave him the prize, though, which was a very handsome writing case. I shall write my journal on the journey and write it out and send it you afterwards. We shall be a large company, 25 boys and 2 masters. You have never been in Switzerland, have you ? In almost all the inns there are pianos, I shall therefore take my sonata of Mozart in D. for piano and violin to finish learning with me. The year before last I took a book with me and I was very glad I did, for sometimes it rains a whole morning and then we can do nothing but stay at the hotel where we are and twiddle our thumbs, a very delightful occupation, I've no doubt, to some people, but not unfortunately to me. Last year I amused myself with chess with one of the masters, but this time I shall take music as my time devourer.

I have read " Adam Bede " and like it very much.

Thornton has not finished it yet, but he likes it too. Bertie sends his love and says he shall soon write; Thornton ditto. I have got no news this time that Father won't have told you already. Do you play chess? I am extremely fond of it. Music and it are my chief winter amusements. It crossed my mind the other day that I had never heard of a woman's playing the violin. Have you ever heard of one? That they don't play on wind instruments I can well understand, but I don't see why they should not play the violin as well as piano, guitar or harp.

Give three kisses to Father, one for each of us, and let him give you the same for us.

I remain, dear Mother,
Yours affectionately,
CHARLES LEWES.

HOLLY LODGE,
WANDSWORTH,
July 13, 1859.

From George Eliot to Charles Lewes.

DEAR CHARLIE,

I look forward to playing duets with you as one of my future pleasures, and if I am able to go on working, I hope we shall afford to have a fine grand piano. I have none of Mozart's Symphonies, so that you can be guided in your choice of them entirely by your own tastes. I know Beethoven's

Sonata in E flat well. It is a very charming one, and I shall like to hear you play it. That is one of my luxuries—to sit still and hear someone playing my favourite music ; so that you may be sure you will find willing ears to listen to the fruits of your industrious practising.

There are ladies in the world, not a few, who play the violin, and I wish I were one of them, for then we could play together sonatas for the piano and violin which make a charming combination. The violin gives that *keen edge* of tone which the piano wants.

I like to know that you were gratified by getting a watch so much sooner than you expected. It was the greater satisfaction to me to send it you because you had earned it by making good use of these precious years at Hofwyl. It is a great comfort to your father and me to think of that, for we, with our grave old heads, cannot help talking very often of the need our boys will have for all sorts of good qualities and habits in making their way through this difficult life. It is a world, you perceive, in which crossbows *will* be *launisch* sometimes and frustrate the skill of excellent marksmen—how much more of lazy bunglers ?

The first volume of the " Physiology of Common Life " is just published and it is a great pleasure to see so much of your father's hard work successfully finished. He has been giving a great deal of leisure

to the numbers on the Physiology of the Nervous System, which are to appear in the course of two or three months, and he has enjoyed the labour in spite of the drawback of imperfect health which obliges him very often to leave the desk with a hot and aching head. It is quite my worst trouble that he has so much of this discomfort to bear; and we must all try and make everything else as pleasant to him as we can, to make up for it. Tell Thornton he shall have the book he asks for—if possible—I mean the book of moths and butterflies; and tell Bertie I expect to hear about the wonderful things he has done with his pocket-knife. Tell him he is equipped well enough to become king of a desert island with that pocket-knife of his; and if, as I think I remember, it has a corkscrew attached, he would certainly have more instruments than he would need in that romantic condition.

We shall hope to hear a great deal of your journey with all its haps and mishaps. The mishaps are just as pleasant as the haps when they are past; that is one comfort for tormented travellers.

You are an excellent correspondent, so I do not fear you will flag in writing to me; and remember you are always giving a pleasure when you write to your loving mother.

MARIAN LEWES.

September, 1859.

From Thornton Lewes writing to George Eliot from Hofwyl (aged 15).

DEAR MOTHER,

For the first time do I seize the pen to begin a correspondence which is to be lasting. Can you read German writing? If you can, I will send you, next letter, some pieces of poetry of mine.

When you go to Italy it is understood that we three imps should go with you, is it not? If Father won't have it you must make him agree. He can well spare the money, considering you are to get about a million pounds for your next book.

Father brought me "Adam Bede" which you kindly sent me. Mr. Müller said before Father, "I hope Thornton will lend it me," so that I could not refuse. Charlie and I both like "Adam Bede" very much. If you bring the new work this year do not say anything to Mrs. Müller, for she is such a chatterbox. About my birthday present I do not know what I should like most, but as I am sure you love me too much to let pass my birthday I should like a good map of the Caucasus.

We received your letter at St. Moritz and you can imagine how glad we were to get it as being the first from you. It put a touch to our happiness on the journey.

I have given "Scenes of Clerical Life" to Dr.

Müller's sister, a great friend of mine with whom I used two years ago to catch snails.

With much love and many kisses.

Ever your affectionate son,

THORNTON ARNOTT LEWES.

HOLLY LODGE,
WANDSWORTH,
October 7, 1859.

From George Eliot.

MY DEAR CHARLES,

When people write books which are a little too heavy and pedantic, their writings, as you know, are said to smell of the lamp, it being supposed that the unfortunate authors sat up late at night to write them—with weary eyes and muddled brain. It is probable that my letters to you will smell at least of candle, for as I have no time to write them by daylight, I take the last hour of the evening for the purpose and so give you the fag end of my wits.

The very best bit of news I can tell you, to begin with, is that your Father's " Physiology of Common Life " is selling remarkably well, being much in request among medical students. You are not to be a medical student, but I hope, nevertheless, you will by-and-bye read the work with interest. There is to be a new edition of the " Seaside Studies " at Christmas or soon after—a proof that this book also meets with a good number of readers. I wish you could have seen to-day, as I did, the delicate spinal-

cord of a dragon-fly—like a tiny thread with tiny beads on it—which your father had just dissected! He is so wonderfully clever now at the dissection of these delicate things and has attained this cleverness entirely by devoted practice during the last three years. I hope *you* have some of this resolution and persistent regularity in work; I think you have, if I may judge from your application to music, which I am always glad to read of in your letters. I was a very idle practiser, and I often regret now that when I had abundant time and opportunity for hours of piano playing, I used them so little. I have about eighteen sonatas and symphonies of Beethoven, I think, but I shall be delighted to find that you can play them better than I can. I wish Bertie could be exhorted to *work* at his music, since he appears to have a decided ear for it. I am very sensitive to blunders and wrong notes and instruments out of tune, but I have never played much from ear, though I used to play from memory a great deal. The other evening Mr. Pigott, whom you remember, Mr. Redford, another friend of your father's, and Mr. Wilkie Collins dined with us, and we had a charming musical evening; Mr. Pigott has a delicious tenor voice and Mr. Redford a fine baritone. The latter sings "Adelaide," that exquisite song of Beethoven's, which I should like you to learn. Schubert's songs, too, I specially delight in; but, as you say, they are difficult.

One pities that American importation into Hofwyl! But perhaps the masters are rather the proper objects of pity, having to manage so rough a cub. He must have seen some rough experience among the Indians and in his other escapades. I suppose you are feeling very near to winter, but we, after some cold and rainy weather, are having almost sultry days again. I enjoy very much the great expanse of blue and clouds that make a great arch over us when we are walking on Wimbledon Common, which is really worthy to be called a "plain"—it is such a grand stretch of heath-clad level ground. This fine common is the chief thing we have to make amends for the loss of the Richmond walks, which are so various and so beautiful. We have had a long, long walk to-day, Pug being with us, of course; and I wish you had seen that young gentleman's interview with a brood of small pigs. Pug goes up to every animal with an apparent intention of making their acquaintance, but no sooner do they put out their noses in an inspecting or threatening manner, than he runs to a distance, and like the South Sea Islanders, dances his war dance at a safe remoteness from hoofs and noses. Yet the next minute he forgets his fear and runs up again: clearly a dog to whom experience is not a successful teacher!

That is a dreadful exit that your Herr S—— made from the school—stealing spoons like an Esquimaux or other rascal nearer home. I suppose you look

His affectionate brother
Marian Lewes

back on the thrashing you gave him with all the more complacency. But it is to be hoped that he is a striking exception among German ushers.

I could go on writing longer—it is easy to chat with one's pen in this way—but it is bedtime and your father wants me to do some work for him before I go to bed, so I am obliged to end shabbily before my sheet is filled.

Good-bye, dear Charles. Kisses " over the water to Charlie " from

His affectionate Mother,
MARIAN LEWES.

HOLLY LODGE,
WANDSWORTH.
November 10, 1859.

From George Henry Lewes.

DEAREST CHARLES,

To-day we are going to have Charles Dickens to dinner. He is an intense admirer of your mother, whom he has never seen; and we expect a very pleasant evening and dinner in which two such novelists will gobble and gabble!

Your mother is hard at work on her new book.*

There was a blackguard who wrote a book called " Adam Bede Junior " and advertised it as a " sequel to Adam Bede," but I think the indignation of the Press will have made him withdraw it. This

* " The Mill on the Floss."

annoyed us at first because we thought the people in the provinces would believe the book was by "George Eliot," and as it was certain to be trash—no man of any talent condescending to such frauds—George Eliot would have had to bear the disgrace of having written it.

Pug grows fatter and more fascinating every day, but his intellect does not develop. He is decidedly no genius and will never set the Thames on fire, nor even the Wimbledon ponds.

Your loving
PATER.

HOLLY LODGE,
WANDSWORTH.
November 26, 1859.

From George Eliot.

MY DEAR CHARLES,

It was very pretty and generous of you to send me a nice long letter out of your turn, and I think I shall give you, as a reward, other opportunities of being generous in the same way, for the next few months, for I am likely to be a poor correspondent having my head and hands full.

We have the whole of Vilman's "Literatur Geschichte" but not the remainder of the "Deutsche Humoristik." I agree with you in liking the history of German literature, especially the earlier ages—the birth time of the legendary poetry. Have you read the "Nibelungenlied" yet?

Whereabouts are you in Algebra? It would be very pleasant to study it with you, if I could possibly find time to rub up my knowledge. It is now a good while since I looked into Algebra, but I was very fond of it in old days, though I daresay I never went so far as you have gone. Tell me your latitude and longitude.

I have no memory of an autumn so disappointing as this. It is my favourite season. I delight especially in the golden and red tints under the purple clouds. But this year the trees were almost stripped of their leaves before they had changed colour—dashed off by wind and rain. We have had *no* autumnal beauty.

I am writing at night—very tired—so you must not wonder if I have left out words or been otherwise incoherent.

Your loving
MUTTER.

HOLLY LODGE,
WANDSWORTH.
March 17, 1860.

MY DEAR PUPS,

From G. H. Lewes.

Yesterday I went to see Nursie, who will "keep house" while I am away, and whom you will find here on your return. She read me your letter with the formidable catalogue of your music.

We think of starting on Monday week for Paris

and Rome. All England is on tip-toe with expectation for "The Mill on the Floss," but we shall not hear the cheers which will greet it, for we shall be off before it is out. I expect it will be even more popular than "Adam Bede," though that has had greater success than any novel since Scott (except Dickens). I do not mean has *sold* more—for "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "Les Mystères de Paris" surpass all novels in sale, but in its *influence* and in obtaining the sufferage of the highest and best as well as of the ordinary novel readers, nothing equals "Adam Bede." But her genius is nothing to her tenderness and goodness, and you will all love her nearly as much as I do when you come to know her.

I hope Bertie is well and improving. The young rascal has not favoured us with many letters, but we shall see him and you some time in June.

I have this week received application for permission to translate the "Life of Goethe" into French, and my "History of Philosophy" into German. The "Physiology of Common Life" (my new book) is already translated into German, and the English reprint is also to be published in Germany.

"Adam Bede" is already translated into Hungarian, Dutch, German and French, so you see we are becoming quite European celebrities, and Thornie you will have a hard task to keep up and *extend* the family fame—you must work hard now while you have the chance. As for you, Charles, you do not

need to be told to work, you have done it manfully. God bless you, my boys. Your Mother sends a shower of kisses.

Ever your loving
PATER.

EDINBURGH.
October, 1860.

From Thornton Lewes (aged 16).

DEAR MOTHER,

It is your turn now, as I perceive, to get a letter from me, and I daresay you are expecting one. I will begin with the most important news, *i.e.*, I'm Dux, but of course I have lost my place again and at this very moment I am fourth. Still I am very celebrated through Edinburgh and Leith, but please don't be jealous of my reputation, it doesn't equal yours yet. How are you getting on? and Father and Pug and Charlie? Give the former and the latter my love. I have a bird which I intend stuffing and if it turns out well I shall send it you. It is a wagtail. I stuffed a chaffinch, but he is not fine enough.

I was invited to Mr. Blackwood's on Saturday week to dinner and was as punctual as G. H. Lewes could desire. Dinner lasted 2¼ hours. If a programme of the entertainment would be interesting, here it is: Soup, Fried Soles, mutton, fowls, oyster patties, pheasant, blancmange, omelette, dessert,

etc. Wine in abundance, 8 glasses of sherry and 1 of port—it did me no harm. I enjoyed myself very much.

Herein I enclose my portrait, as Pater does not like portraits he can hand it over to Mother to keep as I know she will like it.

Believe me Dear Mother,
Your affectionate Son,
THORNTON ARNOTT LEWES.

EDINBURGH.
1861.

From Thornton Lewes (aged 17).

DEAR MOTHER,

I am very sorry that you did not enjoy your trip to Hastings very much, but of course you will like your voyage to Italy all the better. I shall like *uncommonly* to go with you as far as Switzerland.

I am glad to hear that you like my portrait. It is said to be just like Father in the good old days of yore. I am sorry that you abhor glass shades, for though to your unartistic eyes the chaffinch looks well enough, to my eyes it would appear like some dusty lump of feathers if not covered by a shade.

Does Charlie teach you boxing? or have you as great a horror of boxing as of firearms?

I am extremely obliged for your birthday present; please Mother dear, look out for stamps when you are in Italy.

Dear Mother

Your affectionate Son

Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada

"Silas Marner" is splendid. I like it extremely, preferring it to "Adam Bede" or the "Scenes." And when I had come to the last page I almost got angry at there being no more of it.

Good-bye dear Mütterchen,

Your affectionate son,

THORNIE.

NOTE.—Thornton died in 1869, having been most tenderly nursed for many months by George Eliot, who was devoted to him and felt his death very keenly.

AVIGNON.

April 24, 1861.

G. H. L. to Charles.

MY DEAR BOY,

Although this is written under difficulties (too long to be explained) I just scribble a line to say that so far we have arrived safe and sound. We reached Paris at ½ past 11 and turned in thoroughly tired. We did not get up till 8 because Breakfast could not be got before 9. Our day in Paris was pleasant enough, spent in rambling about, seeing the pictures at the Luxembourg Palace and visiting Père la Chaise. We got here at 12 and by paying 20 francs extra had a coupé all to ourselves so we had slept tolerably well. After breakfast we went out for a long and delicious ramble of three hours—we left the cold of winter in Paris, and find ourselves in the heat of summer here, roses and iris in full bloom and lilac disappearing. We saw among other

things the tomb John Mill has erected to his wife who died here—very touching. We saw also a rustic dance, very interesting indeed. The people are remarkably healthy, happy and good looking, *que c'est une fête !*

To-morrow morning we go to Arles, and having spent some hours at that curious old relic of Rome, we shall reach Toulon in time for bed unless anything happens.

The sweetest Mother is very tired but remarkably well and says she must add six words to this, so I leave her space.

Ever your loving

PATER.

MUTTER'S AUTOGRAPH.

Die Mutter thinks of her dear Boy very much and loves him better than ever now she is at a distance from him.

NICE.

Thursday, April 25, 1861.

From George Eliot to Charles.

DEAREST CHERUB,

It is my turn to write now and I happen to be the stronger man of the two to-day—poor Pater being headachy . . . We have had a paradisaic journey hitherto—if you can imagine a paradise where there are railways making your fellow-creatures' knees objectionable. However we had

done with railways at Toulon, where we rested for the night at the Hôtel de l'Amirauté, a place to be recommended to all other travellers—only strolling about the town a little and seeing the gay port in the morning sunlight. It does one good to look at the Provençals—men and women. They are quite a different race from the Northern French: large, round-featured, full-eyed, with an expression of bonhomie, calm and suave. They are very much like the pleasantest Italians. The women at Arles and Toulon are remarkably handsome and at Arles they wear a piquant little head-dress—a white crown just at the summit of their heads and a broad black ribbon bound round below it. We stayed an hour at Arles on our way to Toulon to see the Roman antiquities, but they are not astonishing to eyes that have seen Verona and Rome, and we admired the women more. On Tuesday morning we set out about ten on our way to Nice, hiring a carriage and taking post-horses. The sky was grey and after an hour or so we had rain; nevertheless our journey to Vidauban, about halfway to Nice, was enchanting. Everywhere a delicious plain covered with bright green corn, sprouting vines, mulberry trees, olives, and here and there meadows sprinkled with buttercups, made the nearer landscapes, and in the distance mountains of varying outline. Mutter felt herself in a state of perfect bliss from only looking at this peaceful, generous Nature—and you often came across

the green blades of corn and made her love it all the better. We had meant to go on to Fréjus that night, but no horses were to be had, so we made up our minds to rest at Vidauban, and went out to have a stroll before our six o'clock dinner. Such a stroll! The sun had kindly come out for us and we enjoyed it all the more for the greyness of the morning. There is a crystally clear river flowing by Vidauban—called the Argent—it rushes along between a fringe of aspens and willows, and the sunlight lay under the boughs and fell on the eddying water, making Pater and me very happy as we wandered. The next morning we set off early, to be sure of horses before they had been used up by other travellers. The country was not quite so lovely, but we had the sunlight to compensate, until we got past Fréjus, where we had our first view of the sea since Toulon, and where the scenery changes to the entirely mountainous, the road winding above gorges of pine-clad masses for a long way. To heighten the contrast a heavy storm came, which thoroughly laid the dust for us if it had no other advantage. The sun came out gloriously again before we reached Cannes, and lit up the yellow broom, which is now in all its splendour and clothes vast slopes by which our road wound. We breakfasted at Cannes, which is a charming place, with many fine houses and gardens scattered about, and only a small old town. This was about two o'clock, so you will understand

that I mean our second breakfast, which was nothing more than a copy of the first—feeble coffee and tough bread, except that we had some fresh eggs. We had still a four hours' journey to Nice, where we arrived at six o'clock with headaches that made us glad of the luxuries to be found in a great hotel. There was one thing that made me exclaim: "Oh! If the boy were only here!" It was—some excellent preserved apricots in abundance corresponding to your superior demands. *I* slept off my headache, but Pater has been poorly all day. However, we have had nothing to do but rest, and I hope dinner, for which the bell has just rung, will cure him. We mean to go to the theatre to-night, and to-morrow at eight we shall set off by Vetturino for Genoa, a three days' journey.

God bless my darling boy. Let us always love each other more and more as long as my life lasts, and make dear Pater happier every year.

Your lovingest Mütterchen,

M. E. Lewes.

Best love to Grandamma,* of whom I hope you will have good news to tell us and kind remembrance to Grace and Amelia.† Pater is furiously peremptory that I shall write no more.

* G. H. Lewes' mother.
† The maids.

FLORENCE.

Sunday, May 5, 1861.

G. H. L. to Charles.

MY DEAR BOY,

It did the hearts of the tired Mutter and Pater good, last evening, to get your long and pleasant letter. We had swallowed some tea and said *deux mots* to a thin beefsteak, not by any means juicy, when I trotted out to the post in the rain and quickly came back bearing letters from "the boy" and from Blackwood; that from the latter containing the best of news about "Silas," namely, that the "Row" is buying furiously, that everyone speaks admiringly, and that the edition is 7,500 copies, or was on the 24th of last month.

You will have received the darling Mutter's long letter from Nice, therefore I take from that point and resume the history of our very long, very delightful and very expensive journey here. On Friday we started by Vetturino (one always says by *vetturino*, though why one should go by coachman and not by coach is not clear) for Mentone, which we reached at noon. The carriage was as comfortable and elegant as a private carriage in England and the horses good. The road was a succession of pictures, winding up the mountain passes with the snowy Appennines as a grand line on one horizon and the Mediterranean

" deeply, darkly, beautifully blue " on the other, through groves of olives and orchards of orange trees and lemon trees bearing their golden fruit. At Mentone we had half a day of delicious rambling, planning to have a lovely place of our own some day, wherein Pater would raise his own peas, his own pears and his own frogs—leaving filius to do the hard work of digging, etc. Saturday we had another exquisite day ; we stayed two hours to lunch and repose at San Remo, where we saw palm trees in blossom. Sunday the route to Savona was less beautiful, but even less means much beauty. Early to bed as a step to getting wealthy and wise. Monday we got to Genoa and our stay was again intoxicating (*not* alcoholic), we were as enraptured as we were last year. We went to hear Verdi's *Attila* bawled with great vigour at the Opera.

Mutter sternly resisted Genoese velvets and Genoese bracelets, so that we bought nothing at Genoa but a few volumes of Italian literature and history. We stayed at a charming place (Camogli) to lunch, slept at Sestri, next day we got to Spezia, which is very beautiful—I mean the bay and Carrara marble mountains, and yesterday got to Pietra Santa and thence to Pisa where we spent four hours and for the 3rd time were thrilled by the marvels of the place. During the last part of the journey Mutter has not been quite well and to-day she is languid with a slight cold. I have scarcely left

room for her p.s. so will only say God bless you.

Your loving

PATER.

From George Eliot.

Enter Mutter (with her feet well muffled). She imagines herself kissing her dearest Grub and says that she is delighted to hear of his having passed the time industriously and pleasantly. Glad, too, to hear of poor Empson's reprieve. No doubt he will be wiser in the future. The only thing in all the letter (about yourself) that makes me sorry is that you should heat yourself with running. Is that wise ? Your letter is just what we wanted—full of particulars. Write us another like it very soon, and tell me how Grace and Amelia are and whether you are quite comfortable *en ménage*. Remember me to poor Nursie and say I hope to hear she is less suffering than when I saw her. Tell me, too, whether Miss Allen (your " funny little thing ") has yet called for the little book wrapped up in newspaper which I left for her on the drawing-room table. I am afraid of some mistake about it and you know it is very precious, being the children's present to Mme. Bodichon. Take M. d'Albert's letter out of the envelope and send it to me. He sometimes sends no envelope ; in that case enclose it with one of yours. Pater has been pretty well until to-day, but now he has a sore throat. We talk of you very

often and I think of you still oftener. The two months will soon be gone, alas—like other months.

ALBERGO DELLA VITTORIA,
FLORENCE.
May 17, 1861.

From George Eliot to Charles.

DEAREST BOY,

I will begin by telling you that Pater and I are very well and are enjoying our quiet life here immensely. That is the best preface to the "*renovare dolorem*" with which I must resume our journal at the point when we sent off our last letter. No sooner had Pater's severe attack gone off than I became worse, my cold taking a form which deserved to be called by a very long name, but which we found was simply the Florentine *grippe* caused by the bitterly cold winds. Said winds being of a grave and earnest disposition have naturally a disgust for trivial dilettanti foreigners and seize on the peculiarly feeble and worthless with much virulence. In consequence we had a sad history for nearly a week—Pater doing little else than nurse me, and I doing little else but feel eminently uncomfortable, for which, as you know, I have a faculty "second to none."

G. H. L.

At this point soup appeared (for the heat of the weather forces us to dine at 2 and repose all the afternoon) and cut short the eloquence of Mater

Dolorosa, and she suggests now (3 hours later) that I should continue the narrative.

We have seen "Il Trovatore," or heard it bawled (2 acts of it) and "L'Assedio di Firenze," a new opera by Bottesini, the great, very great, player on the double bass. *That* we heard last night, when Bottesini himself played twice on his instrument, the sound of which was like the harmonious plaint of imprisoned angels. Mutter in her delight exclaimed: "Oh! how I wish our dear boy were here!" And indeed that juvenile would have enjoyed it greatly. As to the opera, new it may be, but we have heard it all before often, and do not desire to hear it again.

Our daily programme is this: Up at 7. Breakfast (tea!), cigar and read. Our rooms are two, the sitting-room very cheerful—though rather strong in the way of satin and gold and looking-glasses and other ornamental inevitables—opens on to a broad terrace overlooking the Arno and giving a charming view of part of the city, the bridges and the distant mountains. After cigar we trot out, visit a church or two, or a picture gallery, look over bookstalls and poke into the curiosities of old Florence. Then we go to the Library (a sort of British Museum) open to the public (and a very small public cares to enter), where with great facility we get what books we desire, and read them in peace and comfort. You should see the Mutter

turning over the old books with love! Then we ramble home; dine at 2; siesta till 5 or 6, and then out to drive or ramble and watch sunset effects, or else to opera, where as I said we have been twice, but where we shall hardly go again. More good news about "Silas"! Mudie has again taken 250 copies—making 3000 in all; and Blackwood writes in great spirits about it.

George Eliot again.

Pater takes up my work of reading and catalogue, and I come back to chat with the *Larva* who is to become one day a splendid "angelica Farfalla" when he has fed long enough on our love and literature and Grace's puddings. Your second thought was right to *send* M. d'Albert's letter; for we have some thought of seeing them on our way home, and I wanted to know exactly what he had said. It is very pretty of Mr. Pigott to ask you to go and see him so often: take care and show him that you feel his kindness, but when you don't want to go because you have things to do—practising, etc.—just say that simply, instead of feigning a headache, because he would understand that now you are taking lessons your time is valuable.

Tell Grace I am very sorry to hear of her loss, but I thought she was quite too sharp a person to be open to such misfortunes. She must give up having the new shawl, and I dare say I have some garment which will look quite as well on her shoulders, if not better. The best of all securities against being

robbed is to carry no money in one's pocket and it is to this excellent recipe that I attribute my own freedom from that accident. My best wishes to her and Amelia. It was quite right of you to use that self-denial of leaving "William Tell" at the end of the 3rd act, and I kiss you for it—you are at liberty to imagine a kiss from me, or else to accept a note for it payable at sight. (They do not give p.o's for such payments here.)

I'm very glad you have had some companionship with Empson. Don't neglect writing a little music, so that there may be some composition for us to read when we get home. How we shall enjoy meeting again! I feel very full of thankfulness for all the creatures I have got to love, all the beautiful and great things that are given me to know, and I feel, too, much younger and more hopeful, as if a great deal of life and work were still before me. Pater and I have had great satisfaction in finding our impression of admiration more than renewed in returning to Florence: the things we cared about when we were here before seem even more worthy than they did in our memories. We have had delightful weather since the cold winds abated, and the evening lights on the Arno, the bridges and the quaint houses are a treat that we think of beforehand.

Your letters, too, are thought of beforehand. We long for them, and when they come they don't disappoint us: they tell us everything and make

us feel at home with you after a fashion. I confess to some dread of Blandford Square in the abstract. I fear London will seem more odious to me than ever ; but I think I shall bear it with more fortitude. After all, that is the best place to live in where one has a strong reason for living. We are going out now for our evening's exploration, so I will leave off, though we seem to have told you very little. But we shall make up for it when we get home. The things *we* have to say will keep ; whereas your details would evaporate if you didn't make haste and send them. Love to Grandmama and congratulations on her peace and quietness. God bless our boy. Mutter sums up all her wishes for him in that little sentence. Pater says write again immediately on receipt of this, else we may be gone away on an expedition.

FLORENCE.

May 27, 1861.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST BOY,

Jubilate ! we shall soon be at home again—if indeed you are not learning to do without us so well that our presence will hardly be matter of jubilation. We think of starting from Leghorn to Genoa on Friday next (the 31st) and we shall probably be at home by or before the 15th, but of course we shall write again and let you know precisely when to

expect us, as soon as we have precise knowledge ourselves. Florence is getting hot and I am the less sorry to leave it because it has agreed very ill with the dear Paterculus ; since we last wrote he has been much teased with a cough and other ailments but he is better just now. This evening we have been mounting to the top of Giotto's tower—a very sublime getting upstairs indeed, and our muscles are much astonished at the unusual exercise, so you must not be shocked if my letter seems to be written with dim faculties as well as with a dim light.

It made me feel hot and tired to read of your being out three nights running ! Nevertheless we have rejoiced at you having pleasant musical evenings—especially at your hearing Formes and your prospect of hearing Fidelio. Tell Grace and Amelia to get everything in order at once—curtains up, etc., by the 10th, so that if we should write to say we are coming before the 15th they may be in no hurry or confusion. Ask Amelia to send my muslin dress to the wash, as I shall want thin clothes in the London heat—more difficult to bear I imagine than the Florentine.

Our life has varied little since Pater sent you his last description. We have seen no one but Mrs. Trollope and her pretty little girl Beatrice, who is a musical genius. She is a delicate fairy about ten years old, but sings with a grace and expression

that make it a thrilling delight to hear her . . . We have had glorious sunsets shedding crimson and golden lights under the dark bridges across the Arno. All Florence turns out at eventide but we avoid the slow crowds on the Lung' Arno and take our way "up all manner of streets"—to please a certain wilful pig of course.

You must write to us again, but Pater is going to add his say and he will give you directions about the address. I have said nothing, after all, but here is the pith of all possible letters—from me—that I am

Your loving

MUTTER.

G. H. L.

Mütterchen complaining of the dullness of her scribblement to the dearest of boys thinks that the brilliant Pater (not "*culus*," as she adds) is likely to enliven the page; whereas that luminary is in a state of health the reverse of cheering; but as we are off to Pistoja early to-morrow, the postcript must be written now if at all.

We shall be at Berne by the 6th or 7th so you can address to Hofwyl—no, better say Poste Restante, unless you are writing to Bertie. Our route as at present projected will be Genoa, Lago Maggiore, cross the Simplon to Martigny, Lake of Geneva to Lausanne, and thence to Thun, whither Bertie will come to us. I only hope change of scene will agree better with our bodies (feeble bodies,

aren't they ?) for the hot sun and cold winds of Florence have kept us both very much below par all the time we have been here. Nevertheless Florence is a lovely place and I love it.

Your letters have given us so much pleasure ! The dear little Mutter has begun roaming about the streets several times trying to see something to take to her boy as a remembrance of Florence, but as the boy doesn't wear trinkets and there is no music worth having published in Italy, she has been fairly nonplussed. I tell her it is all nonsense, and that the boy would rather have her all to himself one evening than anything Florence could furnish . . .

God bless you !

Ever your loving
PATER (*not* " culus ").

Another edition of " Silas " ! and Mudie had 100 copies of it already, making 3,100 he has had.

FLORENCE.
May 30, 1861.

From G. H. L. to Charles.

DEAREST BOY,

Mr. Trollope has returned and has seduced us into prolonging our stay for another week, in order that we may witness the great national festival of regenerated Italy on Sunday ; and on Monday make an expedition to the monasteries of the Val d'Arno—

the Camaldoli and La Verrica. Does the word Camaldoli excite any thrill in you? It does in us, and in most of those who have read romance. The Mutter is looking forward to a great treat in going there. But in spite of this delay in starting we shall not be much behind the time we stated for our arrival home, as we shall make up by journeying rapidly.

Since our last we have witnessed a solemn and interesting ceremony, in honour of the devoted youths who fell in 1848 fighting for Liberty. The large church of Santa Croce was arranged with banners, catafalques, tablets and black crape, which gave it a festal yet solemn air. The aisle was filled with troops, the reserved seats with officers and high functionaries, and the reserved seats on each side with the *invités* (among whom were il Signor Lewes e consorte). Every altar was ablaze with wax candles. Two fine bands, one military, and a large but loud chorus performed a requiem and some other pieces. After about an hour of this we had Padre Angelico, a famous preacher, who preached a politico-religious sermon with affecting eloquence and most impressive oratory. He is old and blind, and it was intensely interesting to the Mutter, as you may imagine, to sit and look at his face and hear him uttering brave, wise words to the Florentines. Altogether this is *the* religious ceremony which I have most thoroughly enjoyed; generally

they have been wearisome and rather exasperating, but this was grand throughout and had a real feeling in it.

Also since I wrote we have discovered two open-air theatres to which we have been four times, and intend going as often again as may be. At one there is a really fine melodramatic actress, one who would draw all the town if in Paris or London. At the other there are two good actors. To-night we are going to see Goldoni's "Bottega del Caffè," the comedy you began to read with the Mutter. Don't you wish you could be with us? Dinner is just about to be put on the table and I have nothing more to say except God bless you.

Mutter sends many kisses.

Ever your loving

PATER.

MALVERN.

September 11, 1861.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST BOY,

Your letter was a great delight to us, as usual; and the cheque, too, was welcome to people under hydropathic treatment, which appears to stimulate waste of coin as well as of tissue. Altogether we are figures in keeping with the landscape when it is well damped or "packed" under the early mist. We thought rather contemptuously of the hills on

our arrival; like travelled people we hinted at the Alps and Apennines, and smiled with pity at our long-past selves that had felt quite a thrill at the first sight of them. But now we have tired our limbs by walking round their huge shoulders, we begin to think of them with more respect. We simply looked at them at first; we feel their presence now, and creep about them with due humility—whereby, you perceive, there hangs a moral.

I do wish you could have shared for a little while with us the sight of this place. I fear you have never seen England under so loveable an aspect. On the south-eastern side, where the great green hills have their longest slope, Malvern stands well nestled in fine trees—chiefly "sounding sycamores," and beyond there stretches to the horizon, which is marked by a low faint line of hill, a vast level expanse of grass and cornfields, with hedgerows everywhere plumed with trees, and here and there a rolling mass of wood. It is one of the happiest scenes the eyes can look upon—*freundlich*, according to the pretty German phrase. On the opposite side of this main range of hills, there is a more undulated and more thickly wooded country which has the sunset all to itself, and is bright with departing lights when our Malvern side is in cold evening shadow. We are so fortunate as to look out over the wide south-eastern valley from our sitting-room window.

Our landlady is a quaint old personage, with a strong Cheshire accent. She is, as she tells us, a sharp old woman, and "can see most things pretty quick"; and she is kind enough to communicate her wisdom very freely to us less crisply-baked mortals.

BARLEY MOW INN,
ENGLEFIELD GREEN,
Monday morning (*March*, 1862).

From George Eliot.

DEAREST BOY,

Please tell Grace that we shall be home to dinner to-morrow—Tuesday. We had agreeable weather until yesterday, which was wet and blustering, so that we could only snatch two short walks. Pater is better, I think, and I, as usual, am impudently flourishing on country air and idleness. On Friday Mr. Bone, our landlord, drove us out in his pony-carriage to see the meet of the Stag-hunt, and on Saturday *ditto* to see the Fox-hunters, so, you perceive, we have been leading rather a grand life. The rest we will keep till we get home.

Ever thy loving
MUTTER.

16, Blandford Square.

May 9, 1862.

From George Eliot to Charles abroad for a holiday.

Dearest Boy,

When Pater read your letter aloud to me I said as Jacques did to the pretty music—"More, give me more!" I wanted to know everything up to the minute you wrote. However, it was a great comfort to know that you had arrived without mishap, beyond the blisters which spoiled your beauty. Pater and I came home on Tuesday, rather sad at quitting the fields and commons, but still glad to think that we should have all our books about us and get the peculiar inspiration that belongs to one's own chair and writing table. I thought I looked very splendid in the glass the second day, but I am getting dowdy again I fear. Pater on the contrary seems more jaunty and energetic than ever to-day, in spite of the rainy weather which has succeeded our brilliant time at Dorking. We went to our Philharmonic concert on Wednesday evening and came away at the end of the first part after hearing Spohr's Concerto in E played by Joachim, the Jupiter Symphony, and two duets sung by the sisters Marchisio, whose voices struck us as very fine, though one hardly cares about hearing them again. On Thursday we had a long business visit from Mr. Smith, about which I leave Pater to tell you or not, as he likes;

and to-day, after paddling through the dirty streets in search of shirts and a tea-urn, my time has been taken up by calls from our good friend Mr. Spencer* and from Miss Marshall. Besides that, we have transformed the drawing-room, closing one door and placing the piano across it, so as to leave the back drawing-room open, and we like the change very much. Pater and I both think the piano sounds better, but perhaps that is only because we had thought too disrespectfully of it in our absence. Nevertheless, my dislike of the touch is confirmed, it is a piano on which it is impossible to play delicately. Pater wrote yesterday to Mr. Burton† to tell him how much we admired the pictures, and to-day we have had a letter from him in reply. When he received Pater's he was reading the "Memoirs of Spinoza" by that dear little man and great author—a pretty coincidence, was it not?

We received a packet addressed in Madame Bodichon's handwriting the other day, but there is no sign at present of her being in Blandford Square. I think I have emptied my budget of incidents now, and must fall back upon sentiment or admonition, as is the way with us poor novel writers. And by way of sentiment I will tell you that when anything pleasant happens while you

* Herbert Spencer.

† Afterwards Sir Frederick Burton.

are away I feel that the joy is not quite complete until our " grub " knows it—grubs being notoriously sympathetic animals. For admonition—enjoy yourself very much and pack as much health and fresh thought within you as possible, to last till the next holiday. Grace and Amelia were particularly glad to hear that you had only blistered your face and *not* lost your money. Don't think Mutter is not happy because she has written you a dull letter. She is very much interested in her book-writing and feels herself bathed in blessings, always reckoning one of them to be her boy, who will grow so good—so good, better than any of her books. Pater will fill up the sheet to make amends for my deficiencies.

DEAREST BOY, *G. H. L.*

I have little to add to the Mutter's budget, but that little is prime news, namely, that Smith again offered me the editorship of the *C. M.**, which I again declined, but accepted the post of Literary Adviser at the pleasant salary of £600 a year! For this I shall only have to give my advice and suggestion, read articles about which he is in doubt, and incur no further responsibility. He will call here about twice a week to see me, *et voilà tout.* He still cherishes the hope that ultimately I may be induced to take the whole editorship, but I think

* *Cornhill Magazine.*

my present office so easy and well paid that I doubt very much my wishing to change it.—Don't mention this to anyone.

We go this afternoon to the rehearsal of the New Philharmonic, which however is not a very attractive concert this time, as you will probably see in the *Athenæum* which I send. Miss Blagden of Florence has come to town and wants to see Mutter again, so I am going to pay her a visit of ceremony to-day and shall propose to take her to the Philharmonic on Wednesday, as Mutter shirks the gas.

There is a letter here for you from Empson; shall I open it and send you word of its contents in my next?

The divine May weather seems to have vanished altogether, and thunderstorms to have taken its place. I hope this is but a "local feature" and that Geneva smiles upon you her sunniest. You must be full of details about place and people in your next.

"No Name" gets rather dreary. Perhaps because we have to read it aloud, the enjoyment is mitigated.

God bless my boy.

Ever your loving

PATER.

Give my kindest remembrances to M. and Mme. d'Albert, and of course the Mutter's also.

16, Blandford Square,
May 21, 1862.

From G. H. Lewes to Charles.

Dearest Boy,

Your good news of health and enjoyment was very welcome to the old people who talk so much about you. Said old people have been very dissipated—for them. One day we hired a Brougham—drove to the Museum with Scharf's letter and saw the prints in the print room—did shopping—sent the brougham for Grandmamma who came to lunch with us and I then took her to the Zoo gardens where there are two puppy bears—such loves! I had one out of the cage and let him suck and bite my thumb, like a pup; but the old lady was nervous and I was forced to desist. In the evening Mutter and I went to the New Philharmonic—Spohr's "Power of Sound"—exquisite—and Beethoven's Concerto in E which I dare say you know—immense! On Saturday Smith gave us his stalls at the Royal Italian Opera. "Rigoletto"—music poor but Maris charming. Yesterday we had another day—went to the Royal Academy—to the National Portrait Gallery (Scharf not in) and did shopping.

The other day Anthony Trollope came in to lunch and my old friend W. Smith (Thorndale Smith), and we were very jolly indeed. Then Miss Blagden came, and on Monday she took tea with us, so you see we have been "going it"!

Now for a bit of news which you may tell M. d'Albert. Mutter has consented to let her novel appear in the *Cornhill*—it will be announced in the next number and in July will appear the first part, to the end of the scene with Bardo and Romola. It is to be illustrated by Leighton, who is by far the *best* man to be had in England. Smith is in high glee at such an attraction for the magazine and Mutter is less desponding than usual. She read Smith a few chapters before making the arrangement with him, because, as she naïvely thought, "he might not like it." He was enraptured. Don't tell anyone the nature of the work—we want that to be a surprise. As she is only three numbers, or less, in advance, she will have to work steadily now to keep well ahead in case of illness or other contre-temps. But she is in better spirits, and will work all the more readily on that account. Say all manner of pretty things to that good woman Mrs. Müller.

Mutter sends a shower of kisses.

Ever your loving

PATER.

16, BLANDFORD SQUARE, N.W.

Tuesday, February 24, 1863.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST BOY,

I write to let you know that the 7th being the marriage of the Prince of Wales all London will

be blocked up with processions and mob during the day and illuminations will crowd the streets with mob all night. Therefore you had better be home on Friday night, otherwise there is a doubt of your getting a cab at the station. I remember what London was when the Queen was married, and advise you to be home if not to *see* the sight at least to avoid the deadlock of the mob.

Mutter has been very poorly ever since you left, and we are going to-day to see if Dorking will restore her. We shall probably be back to receive you—at any rate I shall. On Sunday we drove to Wimbledon to see the Congreves. This is the only "outing" or change we have had since I last wrote.

Your loving

PATER.

NITON,
ISLE OF WIGHT.
June 21, 1863.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST BOY,

I am very happy in my holiday finding quite a fresh charm in the hedgerow grasses and flowers after my long banishment from them. We have a flower garden just round us and then a sheltered grassy walk, on which the sun shines through the best part of the day; and then a wide meadow, and

beyond that trees and the sea. Moreover, our landlady has cows and we get the quintessence of cream—excellent bread and butter also, and a young lady with a large crinoline to wait upon us. All for twenty-five shillings per week; or rather, we get the apartment in which we enjoy those primitive and modern blessings for that moderate sum.

I am glad you enjoyed "Esmond." It is a fine book. Since you have been interested in the historical suggestions, I recommend you to read Thackeray's "Lectures on the English Humorists," which are all about men of the same period. There is a more exaggerated estimate of Swift and Addison than is implied in "Esmond"; and the excessive laudation of men who are considerably below the tip-top of human nature both in their lives and genius, rather vitiates the Lectures, which are otherwise admirable and are delightful reading.

THY MUTTER.

HÔTEL DE LA VILLE,
VENICE.
May 20, 1864.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST BOY,

Your letter was read aloud to the Mutter as we floated in our gondola down the enchanting Grand Canal. We have the same apartment that we had

four years ago. It consists of a comfortable *salon* and three bedrooms on the first floor. The balcony of our *salon* overhangs the Grand Canal with the Rialto only a few yards off. We pay for this, and excellent breakfast, *table d'hôte* dinner, with meat, fish (such fish !), etc., and wine *ad libitum*, light and attendance, how much do you think ? Nine francs each per diem.

I often wish Ben were here—such sniffing !—and it would enlarge his mind. Impossible in words to convey any idea of the dream-like beauty of Venice and the incessant variety of pictures it presents. I don't mean painted pictures only, though they are superb, but animated pictures which are to be seen at almost every step. Burton's enjoyment is quite delicious to see. To think of his never having been in Italy before ! He will gain immensely by his holiday and I hope we shall too. Your mother continues to flourish, she is the best man of the three —she is in the picture gallery with Burton still. Both in body and mind she feels the journey to have been a great help to her. She patters away her Italian in fine style. The day before yesterday we had a capital scene with three *gamins* who chaffed us into the pleasureable weakness of giving them *soldi*. One of these boys reminded your mother and me greatly of Thornie.

Give my love in the most endearing terms to Ben and a saucer of milk in his mother's name. Embrace

your brother and imagine your Mutter's embraces. God bless you my dearest boy.

Ever your loving
PATER.

THE PRIORY.
May 31, 1864.

From Charles Lewes (written a week before his engagement).

DEAREST ONES,

Pater's charming 3rd letter reached me yesterday and I hasten to reply to it so as to be sure not to miss you at Milan. I am sorry the little Man is not as well as "his position" would seem to demand, and very glad to hear how much better the little Mutter is. I long so to kiss her.

My last letter (if you got it) gave you accounts of myself up to the 23rd. The 24th, Queen's Birthday, was a lovely day and was spent at Hampstead! In the morning we had a good practice and in the afternoon a delicious walk on the heath and in the fields near Highgate. I dined and spent the evening there. Wednesday was the Derby—Payne and I went to the Forman's where we spent a very pleasant evening in chat and music. Coming home we had to make our way through crowds of people returning from the race, which was by no means agreeable. Thursday I stopped at home and read and played. On Friday I went to Hampstead and

Charles Lee Lewes

read some duets with Florence Hill.* Saturday dined with Grandmama who was about the same and spent the evening at Hampstead. Yesterday evening Scharf came. He was very much taken with the house and garden. Ben also came in for a good deal of admiration.

There have been no letters since last I wrote except an anonymous one addressed to 'G. H. Lewes, Esq., Author of the "Life of Goethe," etc., London, or elsewhere,' signed "a Pacifican" and informing you that he has directed a London friend to send you a book called "The New Koran," the work of a self-taught man (I suppose probably "Pacifican" himself). Newspapers containing reviews of the "Aristotle" continue to dribble in.

M. Sourd, Blackwood and Mr. William (who would have much liked to see Ben, but he was out with me) have called. Amelia told the latter two she expected you back by the end of the week. Dr. Lunge from Breslau called with a card of introduction from Dr. Kohn. He will be back in a month or so and then promises himself the honour of calling on you. He has some discovery of Dr. Kohn's to communicate to you.

Here ends my budget.

Butors No. 1 and No. 2 are very well and in good condition, and though neither of them has had cause

* One of Gertrude's sisters.

to feel lonely, yet they will wag their caudal appendages with greatly increased animation when they see the doors of the Priory once more close on their travelling parents.

Good-bye, and Pater don't forget to give the Mutter some special—very sweet, kisses for me. Kind remembrances to Burton.

Ever your very loving son,
CHARLES LEE LEWES.

HÔTEL GRAN BRETAGNE,
MILAN.
June 5, 1864.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST BUTOR,

On reaching Milan last night at nine I found your two letters. While the inn was getting ready for Mutter's weakness—tea—I read them aloud to her, and we were both delighted to hear how you had been enjoying yourself, while we have been in a state of perpetual delight. I am better since I left Venice and the little Mutter continues vigorous. We left Venice under one of the most magnificent sunsets ever seen by mortal eye. Padua, where we stayed Sunday and Monday, did not preserve its former glory—perhaps because this time we saw it *after* the matchless Venice; however, we had delicious weather and the art there is immensely

interesting, especially Giotto's chapel, built and painted entirely by himself—a rare gem. Verona was one of the most picturesque cities we have seen; we stayed from Tuesday to Friday, when we went to Brescia, a very lovely and quiet place at the very foot of exquisite mountains which make a verdant wall on one side, while on the other stretches the vast rich plain of Lombardy. We shall spend Monday in looking again at our favourite pictures here. On Tuesday start for Como, Lago Maggiore, St. Gotthard, Lucerne, Strasburg, Paris and the picturesque Grove Road! This is written after breakfast while the Mutter is resting, and as she has now completed her toilette I leave her to send her own love. Give mine to all and believe ever in the love of your

PATER.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST CHICK,

Mutter is delighted to think of you as enjoying many pleasures in her absence. She is wonderfully well and strong and life would appear singularly jolly to her just now if the little Pater were as well as she is. Greetings to Grace and Amelia and much love from your loving

MOTHER.

THE PRIORY,
NORTH BANK,
REGENT'S PARK.
Monday, June —, 1864.

From George Eliot to Gertrude Hill on her engagement to Charles Lewes.

DEAREST GERTRUDE,

When Pater was with Grandma the other day she was full of a great, great secret. I hope you have no objection to Mutter's knowing that secret and telling you of the deep desire that it may be the fulfilled beginning of new and very high joys to you and Charlie.

I am a good-for-nothing friend, too weary to be of use to anyone else than Pater, and my sympathy is all fruitless. But I cherish for myself the happiness of being

Always your loving
MUTTER.

Saturday, March 29, 1865.

To Charles and Gertrude on their honeymoon.

DEAREST CHILDREN,

I could not write to you in time for you to get a letter at Genoa because your own letter came too late—not till yesterday at one. You may imagine how pleased we were to get such bright glimpses of you as Gertrude's charming letter and your hasty notes gave us! There is sunshine in your hearts and some of it is reflected upon ours!

We have been quiet and headachy since you left. *G. H. L.* On Tuesday Trollope came to lunch and went with me to the meeting of the *Review* proprietors. All is finally settled about that important matter and the advertisement has gone forth. I am in a fever of expectation about contributors and not very hopeful.

On Thursday Owen Jones, Pigott and the Painter came. The latter stayed to dinner. Lord Houghton has sent an invitation to breakfast for Wednesday next and wants to know if the little Mutter has any fixed day for visitors. I declined the breakfast reluctantly, but can't afford to lose a morning now with editorial cares upon me. On Wednesday Trollope gives a dinner at the Garrick for the especial introduction of his brother-in-law Tilley to your Pater.

Tell Tom Trollope that I think I have found the right man for his " History of Florence "—one of the Eton masters.

God bless you dearest children. Charles kiss Gertrude—and Gertrude give him as good as he brings—for both

Your loving
MUTTER and loving PATER.

THE PRIORY,
NORTH BANK,
REGENT'S PARK.
December 21, 1865.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST GERTRUDE,

Ever since our Pearl promised me the frieze I have set my heart on having it in my study, on the Bookcase. A length of four feet would do to surmount the middle compartment, but I am ignorant of the mechanical requirements—whether the frieze must be *applied* to something forming a back, or whether it can be simply superposed. I think the decision had better be deferred until you come and see the bookcase, so as to understand the conditions.

It has occurred to me since you were with us the other day, that something I said about "Church people" at Canterbury, N.Z., was open to misapprehension. Your sister Octavia* once said to me: "Have you never known any earnest church people?" and lest you should be unable to correct the sort of misconception implied in her question, I want to tell you that I was brought up in the Church of England, and never belonged to any other religious body. I care that this should be known, not at all on personal grounds, but because, as I have been, and perhaps shall be, depicting dissenters

* Octavia Hill.

with much sympathy, I would not have it supposed that the sympathy springs from any partiality of association.

As to its origin historically, and *as a system of thought*, it is my conviction that the Church of England is the least morally dignified of all forms of Christianity, *i.e.*, all considerable forms dating from the Reformation; but as a portion of my earliest associations and most poetic memories, it would be more likely to tempt me into partiality than any form of dissidents.

What I referred to as dreading in a New Zealand settlement was the peculiar aspect which any religious body assumes when it is quite dominant in a new country, and is not under the stringent criticism of dissent.

Perhaps all this explanation was needless, but lest it should not have been, I prefer to give it. Best love to all.

Always, dearest chick, your loving

MUTTER.

SCHWALBACH.

Sunday, July 1, 1866.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST BOY,

I have nothing special to add to my last bulletin except that we are both stronger and browner, and the prolongation of this repose in this delicious

country may finally set us both up for a few months. It is but patching the old boats to make them seaworthy that can be hoped for at the best.

Our increased familiarity with the country here and round about only deepens our sense of its loveliness. And—precious advantage!—we have it all to ourselves. The woods—such woods!—are solitude. People make expeditions in carriages and on donkeys to distant spots, but the varied and indescribable beauties lying immediately within reach are left unvisited. *We* wonder, but don't murmur thereat.

Our routine is this. Up a little before six and after tub and toilet out on the promenade. There drink the sparkling water and lounge in the sun listening to the tolerable band performing overtures, movements from Beethoven, and Haydn's symphonies, pot-pourris and waltzes. Nine-thirty we start for our ramble often with our books, oftener not. We walk and talk, sit and muse or read, listen to the birds and watch the mystery of light and shade in beech and fir woods—we always dine at three in our own apartment, a splendid *salon*—very large and lofty on the ground floor. It is more expensive but you know how your mother dislikes the table d'hôte and the bore of dressing for it. This is not our only escape—we escape all possible acquaintance. Now we speak only to our landlord, pretty landlady and waiter. The society here does not

seem engaging to us—not many English, and except Lady Blanche Balfour (who has rooms next to ours and is a perfect specimen of the English lady) those not attractive.

After a post-prandial nap we array ourselves in our " war-paint " and appear among the splendours of the evening promenade 6–8. Then a ramble in the tender light of evening and home to tea and bed. " So runs the round of life from hour to hour."

I get my *P.M.G.** and have had two letters from Blackwood full of enthusiasm about the effects of " Felix Holt," and occasionally we see *The Times*. I saw the review of " Felix " and was amused at the writer's absurd supposition that the situation of Esther at the trial was borrowed from Charles Reade's novel, which neither of us ever read. As if the fact of his having used such an incident so recently would not have warned any author from off that ground! It was, as Blackwood described it, an article calculated to do the book good, but not to reflect credit on *The Times*.

Let us hear how our sweet little daughter is and any domestic details. With a shower of kisses from Mutter believe me,

Your loving
PATER.

* *Pall Mall Gazette.*

SCHLANGENBAD.
Sunday, July 15, 1866.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST CHILDREN,

You don't know the amount of virtue it requires to make me write a line in this indolent, dreamy, languorous, *far niente* place—" No, you know, you don't know, you know," so I tell you.

The weather has been superb and we have enjoyed ourselves in this sequestered paradise as two old lovers (observe : *old* lovers, young lovers not being comparable to old ones in the old ones' eyes) only can. We have delightful rooms with a large balcony in which we sit, take all our meals alone, speak to no one, and indeed scarcely *see* anyone. War and rumours of war frighten away the guests, but leave us perfectly calm, assured that no harm can reach us. We like this place better than Schwalbach, partly because of the Schwimm baths which are incomparable luxuries—water as clear as crystal and as soft as milk. The weather has been so much finer and finally we are both so much better in health, which of course means increase of enjoyment. We are in the open air almost all day, take our books out, saunter, muse and meditate and expect to come back beautiful as—anything !

We can't go to Wiesbaden on account of the troops (we come upon outposts in our rambles) so we shall stay at Aix la Chapelle, taking Bonn on our

way, and then see Liège, Bruges, Ghent and Ostend.

Blackwood is in high spirits about the success of "Felix Holt"—he says the admiration is universal. The little Mutter is therefore glad to be away and not to hear it spoken of.

We were glad you enjoyed your stay at the Priory. Ben will have missed you. Waiter come to lay the cloth. God bless you both.

Your loving
PATER.

HÔTEL D'ANGLETERRE,
BIARRITZ.
January 11, 1867.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST CHILDREN,

Your letter came whilst we were at lunch and Charlie's picture of the delicious London climate made a fine background for our imagination; we who had just come in from sitting on the rocks with our books—the Mutter reading a little and the Pater confining his studies to the waves. I will take up our story at Bayonne. Saturday was a memorable day. For the first time I felt thoroughly satisfied at having taken this long journey—the air was delicious, soft and summery—so warm that roses are blowing in the open air and the Mutter had to buy a parasol. At this period London was covered

with snow! Our first visit after a delighted glance at the streets was to the Cathedral. We ascended the tower, and never was a toilsome ascent of several hundred steps more repaid. The view of the Pyranees was enchanting, not simply from the lines of the mountains and the snowy peaks but also from a peculiar combination of sky effects. The town below, the river winding silently through the plain and the background of mountain kept us in a series of detonating "Ohs!" till the *custode* must have formed some suspicion of our sanity. We then explored the town. It is more than half Spanish and so picturesque that it may be called a succession of Prouts. The costume of the Basque peasant—a graceful cap, a red sash and a loose jacket—and the oxen yoked to every cart, helped the general effect of coloured houses and jalousies (mostly buff houses with rich brown or green shutters). The streets narrow, the gables effective, the faces handsome and good-humoured. We sat by the river for half an hour's silent, dreamy enjoyment.

Sunday we had a farewell glance at the town and then set off in torrents of rain for Biarritz, having the coupé to ourselves. Here we have three good rooms and a large anti-room, so that privacy is undisturbed. We took lunch the first day at table d'hôte to see what it was like and one trial was enough—there was only a German baron and an English curate, and a very little of the latter and

"sour English wife" goes a great way with us. And the place! What shall I say of the place? Hyperbole must be largely drawn upon to express our rapture in this marvellous coast. The stormy grandeur of the Bay of Biscay is something surpassing anything we have seen. The huge rocks seem to have been storm-torn from the coast and flung about in fury; and one understands how they were wrenched away and afterwards scooped and hollowed into caverns and arches by these tremendous waves that incessantly dash upon the coast, throwing up their spray to a height of 20 or 30 feet. Then the mountains—and such sunsets! and the miraculous lights in the sky and over the sea. The effect upon us both has been prompt and immense—the Mutter burst out laughing yesterday at my *fat face*.

We rub up our Spanish, I suddenly calling upon the Mutter to utter without hesitation a Spanish word or phrase for any English one I may suggest. In this way we are preparing ourselves for Spain.

God bless you my dearest Chicks. Mutter sends her love to you and all.

PATER.

THE ALHAMBRA.

Monday, February 18, 1867.

From G. H. L. to Charles and Gertrude.

DEAREST CHILDREN,

The address will tell you that the dream of many years has been realised and that the Mutter's

more recent, but more intense longing to see this place has become a fact. To think of Granada with its plain, its mountains, and above all this Alhambra being no longer a name but a picture! Under such a sky and in such a climate the least interesting of cities and of sights would become glorified; but here it is a sober fact that the very earth has a splendour of colour and a poetic halo such as of itself would be enchanting. The "red hill" (Alhambra) it is truly named, and we have rooms in the very garden of the palace, with the snowy mountains seen from our window.

From Malaga we took the diligence to Granada—sixteen hours—but we had the coupé to ourselves, and the first part of the way was so grand and various that it was pure pleasure. The diligence is drawn up these mountains by a team of ten mules and the steepness of the ascent renders it necessary to go very leisurely, so that we have time to *gloat* over the scenery. One quite fairy-like effect was the sight of Malaga in the distance lighted up, as of course it is in the evening, but seemingly for our benefit. Four or five times as the road wound round the mountains we caught a sight of this lighted town some fifteen hundred feet below us. When the moonlight came we had marvellous effects!

Our week at Granada was a perfect one, the weather continuing its transcendant character, with sunsets one sees once in a lifetime elsewhere. We

tore ourselves away—though not before it was time, and on this ground: you know I never write my name legibly or in full in the hotel books, wishing to preserve the obscurity of nobodies. But at Granada, there being only two Frenchmen in the hotel I wrote my name legibly for the sake of acquaintance or other who might come afterwards. The next day the hotel began to fill with English and Americans. It was whispered round at once who we were, and the attention of the guests was flattering but boring. One very pretty American woman, to whom "Romola" was a sort of Bible, made the Mutter write her an autograph.

We saw life in various interesting shapes—in a potter's family up in the mountains—in gipsy quarters—and we struck up a friendship with the captain of the gipsies—he has 3,000 under him, and is a blacksmith of genius. He introduced us to his wife. From Granada we took diligence to Martos and rail to Cordova—our first great disappointment—all its ancient splendour vanished—the deadest of dead cities.

Of the Alhambra I will not say a word. The effect is indescribable; the bliss extreme. We are in a delightful house (all the servants being part of the family) with a kitchen where one might live even if one had English notions of cleanliness, with baby and a little trot, bright eyes and simple kindly

manners, good food and transcendant weather. Dinner announced.

Your loving

PATER.

NITON,
ISLE OF WIGHT.
July 5, 1867.

To Gertrude Lewes.

DEAREST CHICK,

Your letter dated July 1 has just come to me. Pater says "Yes" about the window, but also says: "Of course no step of that sort must be taken until there is *certainty* about the lodgings."

I had it in my mind to make a bundle of clothes and carry them to you as soon as I could on my return. As I employ Eliza to work for me and help her in that way, it will perhaps be better not to complicate our relations by gifts, and to let those go entirely through your sisters. I have two good dresses which may go to the B's.

We are enchanted with Niton and like our good Mrs. Newnham and her cream very much. It is not at all warm here, but the weather is on the whole good.

You are quite right, dear, about the translation. It would have been injudicious for Charlie to be making himself intimate with foreign idioms just when he is wanting to improve his English.

Best love to the dear elder generation. We were talking of them and their virtues at breakfast this morning. So they can reflect, if they wish, that the good of their lives reaches all the way to Niton.

Pater joins in all love. In haste, dearest child.

Your loving

MUTTER.

ILMENAN.

Thursday, August 8, 1867.

G. H. L.

DEAREST CHILDREN,

We had a capital passage to Calais. On board we found Mr. and Mrs. Benson with whom was *Garcia*—pleased to know us and producing on us so delightful an impression that we engaged him for our Sundays. He spoke of you, Gertrude, with real affection and admiration. Dr. de Mussy was also with them and at Calais we picked up with Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Martin, so that we made a large party at Brussels. We dined alone with the Martins and played whist till bedtime. Next morning off we set for Liège, alone, and by good luck found out the hotel where we put up thirteen years ago. We went also to Wetzlau from Brussels, which I had (foolishly enough) never visited, although I ought to have done so both for my "Life of Goethe" and for its own sake. It is the scene of Werter and Werter's Braumen; Charlotte's house,

the village where the ball was held, and the grave of Sarusalen, are all sights strangely enough ignored by English and American tourists, though Germans, of course, flock there. The town itself is old, quaint, and picturesque, with hump-backed streets and delicious environs. Our visit was a complete success.

We had sunshine for Wartburg. Here it was that Luther was hidden for ten months disguised as Junker George. Here he translated the Bible, and here he wrestled with Satan, flinging (like a true literary antagonist) his ink-stand at his sable majesty's head, and staining the whitewashed wall. The ink spot cannot be seen—it has disappeared under the pen-knives of furtive Protestants. But the spot where the ink was, is shown and may be believed in, or not, according to fancy. Also Luther's bed, writing table, bookcase, handwriting, portrait, and portraits of his father and mother—the last extremely interesting.

We came to Arnstadt in an open carriage, again in sunshine. But more than all the sun were the sweet memories of thirteen years ago, when we came on foot by this route, every rood of which came back to us with vivid distinctness, so that at particular turns in the road we could say: "Here I sang such a song or told such an anecdote—here we rested and had coffee, etc."

Last night we went to a ball at the Kursaal.

Such a ball! Such guys! Such ugliness and awkwardness; such costumes. Only in Germany could one have collected a similar lot of scarecrows—*froid, sec et disgracieux!* It was fun to look on for an hour; at the end of the hour "enough had been done."

Our love to everyone.

Your loving
PATER.

5B WAISENHAUS GASSE,
DRESDEN.
August 23, 1867.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST BOY,

My previsions about Ilmenan were most charmingly falsified, and instead of staying only one week we stayed two and left it with many regrets, not having half exhausted the matchless walks through the pine forests on every side. The weather was continuously lovely, never too hot, the sun being tempered by the delicious mountain air in which we spent the greater part of the day. Our daily programme was this: at six-thirty we rose; after breakfast the little Mutter retired to her room, where she sat reading and writing till twelve. I meanwhile sauntered in the woods or climbed one of the heights, taking my notebook with me to jot down any thoughts (not many) that might occur;

then back to fetch Mutter for our warm bath, after which a stroll and at 1.15 table d'hôte (we found *one* trial of having our dinner sent to us enough). This lasted till half-past two in a low, hot, crowded room, noisy with noisy Germans of a small shop-keeping class. But the food was excellent. Then we walked back to our lodging and had coffee and the Mutter read aloud till five, when we started for our evening walk, always beautiful but sometimes very fatiguing. We usually got back by eight, then supper at the hotel, after which Mutter read the *Pall Mall* aloud, and bed soon after nine.

This hotel, though comfortable, is in so noisy a situation that sleep is difficult and unless the windows are closed we cannot hear each other speak.

The Mutter wishes to add a word, so I leave her space.

Your loving

PATER.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST BOY,

I must break my usual silence to tell you of my hearty joy and sympathy in *your* joy at Hardy's recognition of your efforts. I like the news better than any other you could have sent us about yourself, for I am chiefly ambitious for you that you should make yourself felt as valuable in your *business* —after that, in any other good work. But John Mills' Logic would not have been an excuse for his

doing his work at the India House badly. Little Pater looks gloriously well, and has enjoyed our travel greatly. Give my best love to all your three Guardian Angels—you have more than your share. Also to Aunt Susanna* when you see her, with congratulations on her having got through the horrors of removal.

Always your
MUTTER.

PETERSTHAL.

June 27, 1868.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST CHILDREN,

We suppose that hard necessity will have brought your holiday to an end on the 30th, so we send a letter to meet you. I have thought of you in every vicissitude of weather and have thought the dampness damper because you were likely to be the worse for it. But on the whole, I am hopeful about you, for with us the wet days have been exceptional. Let us know soon how you have enjoyed yourselves, and whether our "little daughter" has become robust. After a fortnight's stay here we love the valley and the mountains better than ever, and daily rejoice that we have found such a *Curort*, suiting both mind and body. It would take us many more weeks to find out all

* Mrs. Edward Lewes, sister-in-law of G. H. Lewes.

the walks that wind up the little valleys and round among the firs and white-barked birches toward the summits of the hills. Through the main valley the lovely river Rench, rushing clear among grey stones, gives us its music perpetually, and wherever we go we hear and see little rills hurrying to join it. Morris's charming poem, "The Earthly Paradise" has been our companion in our short morning rambles, which we have been glad to break by frequent halts and readings. In the evening we walk more vigorously and, as usual, we have the woods and hills all to ourselves, the *Kür-gäste* almost without exception lingering the livelong day about the precincts of the "Bad." The ladies are in the majority and find their paradise in round parties enlivened by fancy-work and what Pater irreverently calls "cackle." We do a great deal of bowing and occasionally a little friendly small talk with our neighbours at the table d'hôte. Otherwise, as you may imagine, our days are spent in our favourite dual solitude. We drink the waters diligently and bathe at due intervals, and we find these *Kür-Mittel* highly agreeable. The water is nectar, pearly with carbonic acid and rich in iron and palatable salts. We are both wonderfully stronger. Pater looks well and rejoices in the ease with which he mounts the hills. He has gone now to have his bath so I have taken his place as scribe meanwhile, but he will have something to add. I

hear his unmistakable step "upon the stairs," so no more, except love to all and each, including Aunt Susanna from

Your affectionate

MUTTER.

From G. H. L.

Blackwood writes that all his friends are in a state of enthusiasm about the Poem, and he sends one letter as a specimen. It is from Patterson, the author of several works and late editor of the *Press*, who—writing to Blackwood—says the 'Spanish Gypsy' "*dwarfs* all the poems that were ever written, it is so grand and high in its theme and scope, and so beautiful in its details, so marvellously perfect in plan and working out." This Blackwood characterises as "about the right kind of thing," and I say ditto. Patterson's enthusiasm did the Mutter good—and so did the application of the Music-sellers to know on what terms she would allow the songs to be set to music. If a good composer could be found they are just the thing.

THE PRIORY,
NORTH BANK,
REGENT'S PARK.
Tuesday, October 14, 1868.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST BOY,

I forgot to ask you last night to do me a kindness, when you have the necessary time. Namely,

to get me some music from your city man. I think it will be good for me hygenically as well as on other grounds, to be roused into practising.

I daresay you know of things by Schumann and Schubert, of the genre, for example, of Schumann's Arabesque. Also I should like to have an arrangement of Verdi's best operas for the piano. Pater likes hearing these things.

These are indications which you can perhaps carry out for me better than I could tell you. If I trust to our getting anything ourselves—except books—I usually end by going without it. So you can—or rather I know you will if you can—be of delightful use to

Your loving
MUTTER.

THE PRIORY.
Wednesday, May 19, 1869.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST CHILDREN,

Your pleasant letter was very welcome. We got home on the 5th after a journey to Ravenna, Verona, Brenner Pass, Munich, Paris. Knocked up we were and have not found London conducive to health. But there is nothing specially to complain of, only we don't seem to have had a holiday.

Fields (of Tickner and Fields) has just been with us, offering half share in a uniform edition of the

Mutter's work in America. He offered £300 for the right of printing "Agatha" in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Don't mention this to anyone. He says the "Spanish Gypsy" grows and grows in America—Longfellow, Lowell and the Boston set know the lyrics by heart and are in a high state of enthusiasm.

When we were at Florence on our return the American Ambassador induced us to dine with him, as Mrs. Marsh is an invalid and couldn't come out; they promised that no one should be asked. Longfellow called that afternoon on them and begged hard to be invited. He wants so much to see the Mutter, but Mrs. Marsh was inexorable; she had pledged her word. When we learnt this we were sorry, and then Mrs. Marsh sent a note to Longfellow to ask him to come in the evening, but he was out and the next morning we were off for Ravenna!

I have a heap of things to do, and can't stop to say more than that we both send our dearest love to you both.

PATER.

THE PRIORY.
December 14, 1869.

DEAREST BOY,

If you have not made any arrangement with which this proposal would interfere Pater and I would like to dine with you on Christmas Day. I

write to you, rather than to Gertrude, because I should not like that either she or the Misses Gillies should feel that any other family arrangement had been superseded and you can tell me at once if there is any danger of that, without mentioning my proposal to them. Pater and I shall be quite contented to dine at home.

Just as my pen is beginning to make decent marks I have no more to write than that I am

Your loving

MUTTER.

PARADISE (vulgarly called Salzburg)

Saturday, April 23, 1870.

G. H. L. DEAREST BOY,

We came to this lovely place on Sunday intending to rest for a day or two ; and a week will have been too little for our appetites, but to-morrow we *must* move on to Munich. The weather has been transcendant ; the hotel everything that could be desired, and the scenery is exquisite. It is worth while doing a little " Society "—teaches us " where our dependence lies " and that no society equals being alone together under a sunny sky ! We ramble and sit out feeling that Idleness in her dreaming mood is a very agreeable acquaintance.

The little Mutter has picked up some colour and strength in this place, but her throat is still trouble-

some and causes great need of precaution. It has been most unfortunate for her. She bids me send her love and kisses to you and Gertrude.

Ever your loving

PATER.

THE PRIORY.

May 17, 1870.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST BOY,

Your letter contained a most welcome intimation of your improved condition. We hope to see you come back ready to—" whip your weight in pole-cats."

On Sunday we dined at Lord Houghton's (the little Mutter yielding at last to Lady Houghton's kind wishes). At dinner there was Annie Thackeray, Mrs. Proctor (an American lady), Butler, Johnstone, Kinglake, Lecky, Rosetti, Arthur Russell and a crowd in the evening. Next week we go to the Pattisons' and there we shall see the last of our dissipation.

We had Cara to dinner one day and Spencer to lunch. Last Sunday we had visits from Spencer, Beesly, Lord and Lady Amberley, Sir H. Holland and Sanderson. So you see the " Receptions " are beginning again, though the little Mutter only let the Congreves know of our return. On Saturday we went to the New Phil. and heard Herr Graan play superbly on the violin. Such a nice modest

youth of about 17 or 18. Look out for him should he come in your way.

Your loving

PATER.

BENWELL HOUSE,
LOW HARROGATE.

July, 1870.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST BOY,

You will be glad to hear that Harrogate promises to be a success. We are both better and should the weather only continue as fine as it has been we have little doubt of coming back set up. We have abundance of open air and exercise, and the walks here are lovely. I will tell you what we did yesterday, and it will serve as a specimen. Up at half-past six. At seven went to the Pump-room to take our glass of water (which, by the way, is not very good) and then took a spanker in sun and wind till eight. After breakfast read our books (I enjoying "Don Quixote"; your mother her Spanish history) till half-past nine, when your much expected letter came (together with letters from Mrs. Congreve and Mrs. Taylor to the Mutter). We then set out for a glorious walk. At twelve we again took our water—listened to the orchestra in the pretty grounds of the Pump-room where young ladies were promenading, playing croquet, etc. Lunch at one, books again till three, when we went

to a concert of the Huddersfield Choral Society—glees badly sung, so we left. A third glass and a third walk—dinner at half-past five, tea at half-past seven, then read *The Times* and read aloud to the little Mutter.

We leave on Friday and pass the night and next morning at Peterborough, the cathedral of which attracts us.

Mutter looks from her Spanish to waft you a kiss.

Ever your loving

PATER.

27, BRUNSWICK TERRACE,
HARROGATE.
July 10, 1870.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST GERTRUDE,

Your letter did not reach us till after the middle of the week, when we had had Charlie's subsequent history of your thoughtful, wise care about poor Lizzie. It is a comfort to know how well you and Charles acted on Pater's behalf, and I should think that no other measure as to expenses would be thought of than the one which you suggest to Pater.

I have nothing particular to say; but my heart goes out to you more than usual on dear Aunt Mary's* account, so it is easier to me to write to

* Miss Mary Gillies, with whom Charles and Gertrude lived.

you than to abstain. And you will all be glad to hear that this place seems to be doing wonders for Pater. His pulse is getting strong, his appetite is good and he enjoys the fresh air and exercise. It is settled now that we are to go to Whitby to-morrow week (on the 18th) as our lodgings are let to others from that day. And probably a fortnight's drinking of the strong chalybeate waters is as much as it would be prudent to take at once.

The weather is delicious now, warm, but not warmer than we like it to be ; on these hills there is almost always a pleasant breeze stirring, and on the slightest pretext the wind is ready to howl round us quite mysteriously, something in the configuration of the ground and houses apparently favouring this melancholy music.

I wish you could share the magnificent strawberries which are brought round here in the market carts, and the abundant green peas. But I hope that the rains have been enough round London to have made fruit and vegetables less poverty-stricken than they were.

I say nothing about the dear invalid except that we send our love. You know that we care always to have news of her and all of you. The last sentence in your letter—" I am very well," was especially welcome. Don't hang too much over dressmaking, lest it should cease to be true. We have been a long walk which has tired my legs and made my

arms sympathise, so I write in a sprawling way, just to say that

I am your ever loving
MUTTER.

2, ROYAL CRESCENT AVENUE,
WHITBY.
Thursday Evening, July 21, 1870.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST BOY,

I found your letter on our return from our evening walk, and have read and read it again with keen feeling both about the dead and the living. Now that I know what was the cause of this illness, I dwell with thankfulness on the thought that the sufferings were not more prolonged, and I try to overcome in this way the too urgent thought of what Aunt Margaret and Gertrude have undergone. I think too much, too continually, of death now, almost to the partial eclipse of life—as if life were so narrow a strip as hardly to be taken much reckoning of. And so in spirit I shall be with you all with little interruption whilst these first days of conscious parting last, for there are thoughts which seem to go on like a little ache even while we are thinking other things as well. Give my tender love to both the tried and weary ones. I shall be anxious to know how their health is after this week, and I know you will take the trouble to tell me.

Dear Pater is going on well, except that the change of weather to greater sultriness, unhappily coinciding with our change of place, has caused a slight check in appetite and digestion. This place is quite uniquely beautiful among all English places I have ever seen. It is as quaintly picturesque as an old Italian town and the scenery around it is lovely. I hope that its apparently less benignant effect on our bodies is due entirely to a state of the weather, which will be only transient. At present the visitors are not very numerous, but this grievous war will cause all English coast places to be crowded as soon as the general holiday time comes. Our friend, Mrs. Burne Jones, is here with her children. But Pater has written to Grandmamma to-day, and has probably told her all details, so I may refrain from particulars. I have only written this before going to bed, just to ease my heart. That heart is very much influenced in its beatings by any sorrow or joy that happens to you, dear children. And I trust that Aunt Margaret accepts without indifference that deep respect and sympathy which it has been my happiness to feel towards her ever since I have known her. How precious losses make to us all that still remains!

Ever your loving

MUTTER.

Pater sends his best love.

February 16, 1871.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST BOY,

It has occurred to me that now the weather is getting milder, it may be good for Gertrude to drive out. If so, and if she might indulge herself less in this curative strengthening practice because of the expense that attends it, I want to tell you that you must not spare a few pounds to this end, since we will gladly supply them. I remember that she once used to hire a pony carriage, and perhaps she may be strong enough to manage that now.

Always your loving,

MUTTER.

THE PRIORY,
NORTH BANK,
REGENT'S PARK.
April 26, 1871.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST BOY,

Last Sunday we had Tourguénieff, Trollope, Bullock and Emily Cross to lunch, seventeen people afterwards, including Lady Castletown (her third visit), Lady Colville, Mrs. Clough, a broad-Church Mr. Abbott, Rallston, Dr. Payne, Barbara, Mr. and Mrs. Burne Jones and *Viardot* who sang divinely and entranced everyone, some of them to positive tears. I went to dinner at Mrs. Orr's to meet Tyndall, Dr. Budd, Leighton and the Hardmans. Imagine

what a day of talk and excitement! Society is oppressive—though pleasant. At the beginning of August we go to Edinburgh to be present at the Scott Centenary Festival—the Committee having specially requested the attendance of the Mutter and yours truly. Never was a compliment more acceptable to her. Her veneration for Scott had almost made her resolve to conquer her dislike of crowds and accompany me among the thousands, but now we shall be able to enjoy it with all possible advantages—*sauf un peu de publicité*—which the Mutter must endure with what fortitude she may!

The alterations of the Priory (the estimates amount to £505 without bookcases or furniture) will keep us away till August, whether we like Haslemere or not. The little Mutter is very far from well. Her poem* appears in Macmillan in July. It is postponed in order to accommodate the Americans. The novel† advances slowly. Our love to both.

PATER.

25, CHURCH ROW,
HAMPSTEAD.
May 1, 1871.

From Charles.

DEAREST PATER AND MUTTER,

I am so glad that Haslemere is such a success. I only hope that the commissariat department will,

* "Jubal."
† "Middlemarch."

with time, develop so as to save trouble and inconvenience on that score, and then it will be perfect.

I look forward to July for the Macmillan. I am so longing to read something of yours, Mutter, again. I am constantly asked when we may expect another great work. I wish I knew myself. I hope these country months are destined to be fruitful. They ought to be, to make up for the loss of not seeing you.

Ever your affectionate son

C. L. LEWES.

SHOTTER MILL,
PETERSFIELD.
June 4, 1871.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST BOY,

I feel myself a culprit, that I have to be troublesome to you and again cause you a *détour* on your way home. When I came away I unhappily left behind me a volume belonging to the London Library and it is now required by some other subscriber. The volume is Wolff's "Prolegomena to Homer," which I have had in my possession ever since November and had read through a long while ago. But I still kept it because I wished to read it again, and relied too confidently on the unlikelihood that anyone else would ask for it. Now,

however, by way of Nemesis, some student turns up who wants the said volume. You see, all wrong-doing strikes the innocent more than the guilty, and so in consequence of my mistake you are bothered. I am much afraid lest you should have trouble in finding the volume, but this much is certain ; that it is in one or other of the bookcases in my study. It is less certain, but very probable, that it is in the upper shelves, or else in the middle cupboard of the long bookcase which used to be in the drawing-room in Blandford Square. Its appearance is this : an octavo volume with a brown calf back split on one side, lettered dully with (I think) *Homerus Wolfii*. When you have found it will you be so good as to despatch it to the London Library ? As Pater says, if I had consulted him he would have told me to bring it down here, and then we could have returned it immediately on receiving notice that it was wanted. But wisdom has come too late.

I was made happy by your and Gertrude's letters, which gave me an idea that you were enjoying this young time of the year, and of life.

Always your loving

MUTTER.

NOTE.—This letter has been presented to the London Library.

25, Church Row,
Hampstead.
June 18, 1871.

From Charles.

Dearest Mütterchen,

Last Monday we went, with tickets from the du Mauriers, to a Ballad Concert at S. James's Hall. The audience was a sight to watch. In the orchestra there were many quite working people and their enjoyment of everything was very pleasant to see. Their astonishment and delight were immense at the Chevalier de Kontskel's brilliant fireworks on the piano. They had evidently never heard anything like it before. With that retiring modesty characteristic of Frenchmen he played only his own compositions, fantasies and opera airs, we all know the sort of thing, but to the audience it was quite a novelty. They frantically encored him after each piece—indeed they encored nearly everyone.

Last night we had Ganner* to dinner, in one of his most genial moods, keeping us in a state of laughter the whole evening. He sang capitally to the guitar and was so much carried along with it all that he forgot to think about his omnibus, which he is generally in such a fuss about, and it was past eleven before he thought of asking his watch how time was flying.

Ever your loving son
Charles Lee Lewes.

* R. H. Horne.

SHOTTER MILL,
PETERSFIELD.
June 20, 1871.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST BOY,

I was delighted to have your pretty letter this morning, and I hope that when you are as old as I am you will be having the same sort of pleasure. Gertrude's letter too, reassuring me about her health, was very precious, and I have been thinking of you both with much happiness of late, because you seem to be free from anxieties. I gather from what you say that she is prudently careful not to incur excessive fatigue, but while she has been dreading heat, we have been complaining of cold. One or two rainy days, indeed, gave us the sense of being in the moist warmth of a hot-house, but generally we have had much wind and a chilliness which has made us glad of fires. The parcels were all received safely and I hope you will not be tormented with more commissions, for Pater intends to go to the Priory on Friday next, to hunt for the other books he wants. You would rejoice to see how well he looks, and how thoroughly he enjoys his life here. He has a new vein of interests in mathematics, and he no longer feels exhausted after brain-work, as he had done for months, nay years, before we came down here. I too am gaining a little strength,

I hope, and am more attached to the place in proportion as I am less ailing and weary.

The pleasure of the working people at the Ballad concert must have been pretty to witness. Pater says that he has a recollection of someone having written to us about the pianist, recommending him to our good offices long ago. But are you sure he is French ?

We have several times been to see Mr. Deutsch at Mr. Haweis's, but I never met the host. He and his wife must be good people to have taken care, as they have done, of Mr. Deutsch through an illness which the medical men thought likely enough to be fatal. Helping one's fellow men in that way is much more difficult than any outdoor charities. I am sorry that our good friend Forman has republished his criticisms, because I think there is more than enough literature of the criticising sort urged upon people's attention by the periodicals. To read much of it seems to me seriously injurious : it accustoms men and women to formulate opinions instead of receiving deep impressions, and to receive deep impressions is the foundation of all true mental power. Even with so admirable a writer, so accomplished and mature a judge as Lowell, whose essays we have been reading, I feel how worthless his critical articles are compared with his essays on his " Garden Acquaintances " and on " Winter." These are like a pure brook (we have endless brooks about

us here !) and the others are like Crystal Palace fountains got up for display and making you feel that there is too much of them.

Pater has just read me from *The Times* that Mr. Grote is dead. A few years more of life would have been more valuable to himself and others than is usual at his age, for he was still working at important things. I am glad to hear of Gertrude's portrait being taken up again. There was so much that we liked in the conception of the picture that it was a pity not to have it made just the thing. Pater sends his best love. He is wandering up and down the room just now, wishing for the dinner to come in. Our walks in the high bracing air make us hungry, and we try to live as well as the present bareness of the land in the way of vegetables and the small variety of meats at command will allow. We consume most of the eggs to be disposed of in the neighbourhood.

Is not the weather like April ? We have just had a great thunderstorm and now the sun is sending yellow and blue patches through our painted glass on to my paper. I write always on my knees—that is, with the paper on my knees—now, and thus avoid any stooping. I recommend that plan to Gertrude.

Good-bye, dear children.

Always your loving

MUTTER.

GERTRUDE LEWES.

(From the portrait by Margaret Gillies.)

14, Nottingham Place.

July 2, 1871.

From Charles.

Dearest Mutter,

I don't know where to begin, there seems so much I want to say "I would that my pen could utter the thoughts that arise in me."

I was only the other day re-reading the first 2 or 3 scenes in the "Spanish Gypsy." How brimful of thought and humour they are. Your writing, like great music, is always revealing fresh thoughts. One ought constantly to be reading over again instead of impotently longing for more. It is as fresh when re-read as anything new—it is only one's fancy beforehand that it will *not* be new which keeps one constantly from the enjoyment within one's reach.

I want to say how much I feel in your sweet letter to me about deep impressions being so much more important to receive than formulated opinions—so much so that I mean as far as possible to eschew in future the expression of opinions and fill my time more with receiving impressions.

Yesterday afternoon was a field day for some of Octavia's* tenants, when to the number of 81 men, women and children they were invited to George Macdonald's at Hammersmith, on the banks of the Thames. The Macdonalds have a large house with a beautiful, very large, old-fashioned garden with two

* Octavia Hill.

immensely long-stretching lawns. Many friends, philanthropic and otherwise, had been invited, about 40 altogether and mixed with and talked to the poor people, so that they felt quite befriended and happy. The day was glorious and after the long process of dining—a process that seemed as if it would never come to an end, so unlimited was their appetite—and then games on the rear lawns, we all went to the lawn nearest to the house where a stage was erected and we were all held in delight for two hours witnessing one of Mr. Macdonald's plays for children ("Snowdrop," the fairy tale dramatised) admirably acted by their own children and one or two friends. I did wish you could have been there, for it was such a pretty sight, and in delicious, warm, scented air with trees rustling overhead and the sun shining brightly over all. Dear, dear Mutter you are so often in my thoughts. It is so long now since I saw you both, it is quite unnatural (and you don't like *unnatural* things!) Kiss one another for us.

Ever your affectionate son

CHARLES.

SHOTTER MILL.

July 10, 1871.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST BOY,

I should have written you a word before, but I have had an attack of headache from which I am

not yet quite delivered. When one has been unable to do anything for those days, life seems made up of dropped stitches.

I was charmed with your description of the fête at Hammersmith: it is so thoroughly satisfactory to see many people concurring to help Octavia! That is just as it should be.

I think Pater has not told you since we gave up going to Scotland we have tried to keep this cottage till the end of August but have have not succeeded, Mrs. Gilchrist having made arrangements with George Smith, water-colour artist, who had the place last year, to come again on our departure at the beginning of August. And said Mr. Smith very reasonably objects to inconvenience himself for our sakes, though enthusiastic Mrs. Gilchrist seemed to expect it of him. So we shall be unhoused on the 2nd. and though another place near has presented itself as possible for us, Pater begins to prefer the idea of our going to Harrogate for a fortnight, seeing that I am not very flourishing, and that the waters there did me great good last year. In that case we should want to be at home for a night or so, and I am wondering whether the house will ever be habitable again. But at present, perhaps Pater has not absolutely decided on our movements. We have had one visitor since the Blackwoods in May, Mr. Clark of Cambridge, who had been to Tennyson's and could not resist the

temptation to come to us when he found that we were only a quarter of an hour from the railway station. But he had been so discreet as not to say that we were here to Tennyson, and we begged him to tell nobody that he had seen us. However, to-day Mr. and Mrs. Call are coming for an hour on their way to Havant where they are going to dine, and I shall be glad to see them, because they are to go to Italy for a year or more this Autumn. Tennyson's house stands on one side of a great ridge called Blackdown, which divides two quite different aspects of country. He is on the side opposite to ours and has a vast plain stretching before him, whereas on our side there is perpetual variety of little hill and little valley. Both are beautiful. If the situation were convenient this is just the kind of country I should like to come to as a second home; but one cannot get even a screw for a door handle nearer than Guildford! And one has to scour the country and offer up petitions in order to get butter, fowls and vegetables. It is a favour when you can get milk daily by sending for it!—Pater has just brought me in a note from Mrs. Simmons, who lives in a very pretty house opposite to us, offering it to us for August, so I shall keep my note until we have decided.

P.S.—No decision about the cottage.

SHOTTER MILL.

August 10, 1871.

DEAREST BOY,

From George Eliot.

Since Pater has left a blank page I will use that and the quarter of an hour before dinner in writing to you—just a word of love and chat.

I have often thought of you sitting or rather standing in your City office on these fine days—as you said—and enter into the longing for more freedom. But I am comforted on account of you by the reflection that happiness depends much more on "must do" than on "may do." Of the two evils it is unspeakably the less to want a little more freedom, than to have more than one knows what to do with. All that reads like very confused English now I have written it—but here is the servant come to say dinner is ready, so you will understand the source of bad style.

Afternoon. We enjoy our quiet the more because we have escaped being miserable at Edinburgh. I am pretty well, for me, in spite of Pater's report that I am "vaguely ailing," which sounds like a general description of life. I am writing a big book and thinking that I shall never finish it.

Love to Gertrude from her and

your loving

MUTTER.

Tennyson and his wife called yesterday. She left

him behind and he read "Maud," etc. Then we walked part of the way home with him.

DORKING,

Sunday, April, 1872.

From George Eliot to Charles.

DEAREST TOP-KNOTTED CHICK!

I have nothing to say except that Pater and I were very much pleased to have your nice long letter—that we are having paradisaic weather—that I am better at last, and that Pater seems especially jolly, so that he will be an unusually full bottle of sunshine for you on Tuesday.

We like our six old maids all the better that their favourite youth is no longer here to delight them with his jokes. Great nuisances—youths—don't you think?

If I don't see you again before you set off you must imagine me thinking of you all the more, and longing that you may get all possible enjoyment and good out of the holiday. We are uncertain which day you will choose to set off, and perhaps your plans may differ from our expectations.

However that may be, here is Mutter's blessing in "winged words" that will fly by post and by railway and steamboat and over all hills and vallies.

God bless my boy, and send him back to his loving

MUTTER.

16. Blandford Square
N.W.

Dorking
Sunday April 17

Dearest dop. knocked chick!

I have nothing to say except that Pater & I were very much pleased to have your nice long letter - that we are having paradisaic weather - that I am better at last. & that Pater seems especially jolly, so that he will be an unusually jub bottle of sunshine for you on Tuesday.

We like our six old maids about
letters that their favourite youth
is no longer here to delight
them with his jokes Great
nuisances – youths – don't you
think?

If I don't see you again before
you set off you must imagine
me thinking of you about
more, & longing that you
may get all possible enjoy
ment & good out of the
holiday We are uncertain

which day you will choose to set off, & perhaps your plans may differ from our expectations.

However that may be, here is Mutter's blessing & "wing'd words" that will fly by post & by railway & steamboat &, more ah like & rabies

God bless my boy, & send him back to be living

Mutter

PARK ROAD,
RED HILL.
June 30, 1872.

From George Eliot to Gertrude's sister before her marriage.

MY DEAR MINNIE,

I hope that Gertrude is link enough between us for me to be allowed to call you by that pretty name. For tho' we have not seen much of each other face to face during these seven years, regard is not always to be measured by direct intercourse, and there has been an unbroken thread of affectionate interest about you in my heart ever since we first met—at church you remember when we had Mr. Maurice* preaching to us, and next at Hampstead one evening when I was particularly pleased that you took an opportunity of coming to sit by me. Whenever Gertrude could tell me anything about you I listened and kept a record of it. And so I thought I might claim the privilege of sharing a little in Gertrude's happy work of preparing pretty things for the great epoch which is coming in your life.† I did not in the first instance mean that it should be other than a secret between her and me, but when she wrote implying that it would give you pleasure to know, I could not object, for I shall like to believe that you associate me with something that enters into your life as a convenience.

* Frederick Denison Maurice.
† George Eliot was helping to make some of the trousseau.

When I use the singular person please understand that it includes Mr. Lewes, who shares all my feelings towards you. We have often spoken, chiefly in our peaceful walks, of our trust in the graver happiness in store for you. Surely, dear, there is greater promise in your future, for you enter on it after rich experience in close ties, and in duties well fulfilled.

Think of us always as your warm friends and believe me—I am at this moment solitary and can send no special message—

Yours with sincere affection,

M. E. Lewes.

Elversley,
Park Road,
Red Hill.
Thursday, July 13, 1872.

From G. H. L.

Dearest Boy,

The superb weather is co-operating with the perfect quiet to bring back the colour and the oval to the Mutter's cheek. She is visibly and almost daily improving in strength, enjoys her life here and her work and is writing splendidly. The house is very comfortable, shut out from the world amid fields—not a sound except hens cackling and dogs barking reaches us—not a soul knows where we are, so we haven't even many letters to disturb us.

As a *place* it is not comparable to Limpsfield or Haslemere, but it is still very lovely and quiet, our domestic arrangements are all easy and pleasant.

To employ my day I went on Saturday to the Crystal Palace—a drearier day's pleasure I never spent. It is the last visit I shall pay that Cockney Paradise.

I overheard the comment of two young ladies, dressed in the extravagance of fashion, who on being called to look at the Octopus, gave a contemptuous glance and remarked—"Well, I don't think it is at all *pretty*." "Nor do I," replied the other. *Exeunt* ladies! Wouldn't this do for du Maurier? How is that dear fellow? I wish I could see his sweet smile and hear his delicious voice occasionally.

I hope the book will be completely finished before we return.

God bless you.

Ever your loving

PATER.

HOMBURG.

Thursday, October 10, 1872.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST BOY,

Your pleasant letter came like added sunshine to the sunshine of our sky. The weather has been very variable and to-day the *temps est à l'eau* very

decisively, but we have had some exquisite days and on the whole cannot complain. The Autumn tints are unusually varied and brilliant, and Darby and Joan enjoy their long solitary walks all the more as a contrast to the tumult of cackle in the Kursaal. The W——s. (whom to avoid we employed the strategy of a Von Moltke, and whose proferred hospitalities, after vaguely postponing, I point-blank declined as "among the impossibilities"), have departed at last. But Lady C.,* after three days at Baden-Baden, so much regretted the loss of the Mutter's society that she wrote to say if we were going to remain she should return to Homburg, and this she did, bringing Lord C. and Mr. W. with her. She is a very dear creature and I like her more and more, but unhappily there are other grandees here who want to get hold of us. The Countess Vidome (wife of Bismark's predecessor) has succeeded—a rattling, noisy, energetic woman only tolerable on account of her lovely daughter, the Countess Hildegarde, a girl of 19—six-foot two—with an exquisite face, the temperament of an artist, a large nature, and a wayward, striving spirit. She is a superb performer and is a fanatic for Wagner, whose music, however, remains to us a language we do not understand. But "Society" oppresses the Mutter and we intend running away on Sunday. We propose staying at Damstadt and Stuttgart for

* Lady Castletown.

the theatres, thence to Strasburg where there are several men of science I shall visit. Our love to Gertrude and Blanche.* The kiss was duly transmitted to the Mutter. Do thou likewise pay the debt.

Ever your loving
PATER.

AU CHÂLET No. 6,
PLOMBIÈRE LES VOSGES.
July 4, 1873.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST BOY,

You see from this address how strictly we have carried out our plan of having *no* plan. We got to Paris on Tuesday evening and went to the Hôtel de Lorraine where we had been advised to go by Emerson and Russell Lowell; found it very quiet, very clean and very cheap (3.50 for table d'hôte with wine). We went to a Café Chantant in the Elysées, a dismal affair—we went to Fontainebleau and greatly enjoyed the quiet, the delicious weather, and the magnificent forest which we drove in three times. At Troyes the cathedral with its painted glass and the picturesque old houses gave us a delightful quiet afternoon.

Although this place is very full (entirely of French) we were fortunate enough to secure two large

* Charles's baby daughter, whom George Eliot describes as: "a charming young lady—fat, cooing and merry—altogether a ravishing child."

cheerful rooms in this Dépendance of the hotel—first floor—with a garden to ourselves, a balcony and a superb view of the mountains. Continual showers have prevented our taking any walks yet. We sit down to a table d'hôte déjeuner some hundred persons, so quiet that half a dozen Germans would make more noise; dinner at five-thirty. We are certain here of charming scenery, varied walks and good food.

Mutter is waiting to go out. Best love to both and kind remembrances to all the de Müller family.

Ever your

PATER.

No. 6, SCHWEDENPFAD,
HOMBURG,
HESSE.
Friday, August 8, 1873.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST BOY,

We were glad to get your news of you and Gertrude and Blanche. The long silence made the anxious little Mutter anxious. Yet we knew not where to write to you. We stayed 18 days at Plombières and have regretted ever since that we left it. No place ever did the Mutter more good in a short time. We should have stayed two days at Nancy had it not been on the eve of the Prussian evacuation and the Mutter's dread of crowds drove

us away. From thence we went to Strasburg and Frankfort where we were three days in order that we might attend service at the Synagogue (for Mutter's purposes).* It was terrifically hot and not interesting to us who had often been at Frankfort.

We avoid the Kursaal here—dine and lunch apart—keep from the promenade and trust to avoid everyone except Lady Castletown whom we like too well to wish to avoid. Mutter is now at her bath and I utilise the leisure to scribble this. Love to Gertrude and kisses to Blanche.

From your loving

PATER.

THE COTTAGE,
EARLSWOOD COMMON,
RED HILL.
Thursday, June 18, 1874.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST CHARLES,

You will be glad to hear what report we have to make of this place after a fortnight's trial. It is worth going through the London racket to realize the bliss of perfect seclusion, and the long days of sunshine (moral and physical). We are both beginning to turn the colour of berries and propose "putting on flesh" before we leave. The cottage is very comfortable but we are out of doors many hours of the day, either strolling in the garden or

*For "Daniel Deronda."

on the common, or driving. The long spaces of uninterrupted works are good for the "Foundations" which are being laid with concrete.

"Middlemarch" has to be reprinted and "Jubal" is rapidly approaching that pleasant state.

We have two dogs here—one a dear brown spaniel very like Dash—the other a Skye terrier all hair and irritability, his yapping takes away from his fascinations and I am going to try to get him removed.

The Mutter says she has nothing to send but her love and a wish to hear how Gertrude and the children are.

Ever your loving
PATER.

THE COTTAGE,
RED HILL.
August 17, 1874.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST CHARLES,

I went to the Priory the other day and found there the Diploma of Foreign Membership to the Hungarian Academy which the President had sent me, stating in his letter that my "highly distinguished scientific merits have caused" me "to be admitted among the *celebrious* Foreign Members." The tribute is pleasant and the honour of a kind some men run after, but I cannot feel as elated as I suppose I ought.

The little Mutter has been variable in health and I do not get strong as I hoped and expected, yet getting through my work steadily enough. I must tell you of the continued sale of "Middlemarch" and the poem—the cheap edition sold over 5,000 copies in two months and is going on as brisk as ever.

Our love. Ever your

PATER.

THE ELMS,
RICKMANSWORTH.
Thursday, June 24, 1875.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST CHARLES,

We enjoy this place vastly—the drives surpass those of Reigate and we have a park opposite in which we can walk and a lovely park ten minutes distant in which we can drive. The Mutter is certainly better but not so strong as I could wish, and perhaps will not be quite herself while this book is on hand. which gets on very slowly and with constant despondency. She wishes me to "apologise" for her not writing to you.

I am much the same—except that I too feel the benefit to my work of the long uninterrupted peace. You will have my book in a few days.

Love to G. from both.

Ever your loving
PATER.

THE PRIORY,
NORTH BANK,
REGENT'S PARK.
November 11, 1875.

From George Eliot.

DEAREST BOY,

Many thanks for the list. It has been just the thing in reminding me of "Al piè d'un Salice" and of "Per Pietà." The latter was an early love of mine. I picked it out with delight in Knight's collection when I had no one else's taste as a finger-post, and there is a peculiar pleasure in finding one's independent impressions afterwards warranted by the best judgments. "Che farò" and "Ho perduto" I have already used in "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story" having heard Johanna Wagner sing them at Berlin when in her glory there..

Pater came back to dinner yesterday after a very pleasant "Schman" of Physiology at Cambridge. Best love to all from

Your loving
MUTTER.

You have not said whether Gertrude has got back her voice, but I gathered that she had from what she said of the effect the air at St. Maurice had upon it.

MACON.

Friday, June 15, 1876.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST CHARLES,

Just come in tired from our ramble about this town, which closed with a visit to the house where Lamartine was born, I make use of the interval before dinner to send you word of our doings and sufferings.

We gave up our first notion of lingering on our way to Paris in order to be able to go to the Russian church there. When we arrived we were dismayed to find that it was *Race week* and all the hotels were crowded. After driving about from one hotel to another in an *open* carriage, the weather being wintry, we at last got good rooms at the Hôtel des Deux Mondes. Our visit to the Russian church was well worth making a push for. The Archduke Michael and his Duchess were there and had probably brought their own choir. At any rate the singing was more exquisite than any we have ever heard. There was a boy who sustained and died away on one note more like Jenny Lind in her prime.

The Mutter was not well enough for any amusements so we dined cosily at a café. Next morning we walked to the Poste Restante for the final proofs —after shopping, both with headaches—we drove in the Bois de Boulogne for two hours, corrected proofs and went to see "L'Étrangère," a most

interesting and engrossing piece and the acting very fine, especially Coquelin and Sarah Bernhardt.

HÔTEL DE L'EUROPE,
AIX LES BAINS.
Saturday Afternoon, 4 p.m.

I resume my narrative in our new quarters. The journey here to-day was delicious—though long—six hours. We have had difficulty in getting rooms and must quit them on the 21st. They are extremely pleasant, looking on to a sweet garden and as quiet as one could wish, so the prospect of moving is not agreeable. We are ravished with the aspect of Aix under this delicious light, the air is soft and balmy, the mountains look in upon us through our windows in a most inviting manner, if the baths suit us we shall stay some days. But it is uncertain whether we shall remain in this hotel.

We both long for a little quiet solitude *à deux*.

Our love to Gertrude and the chicks.

Your loving

PATER.

NOTE.—The following (given in facsimile) from their friend George du Maurier, was found among the family letters.

27 Church Row
Thursday Evening

My Dear Lewes,

I am going to ask if you will be kind enough to give the accompanying sketch to your father & Mrs Lewes; I am off to-morrow & it is too large to send by post. I did intend to make a special drawing for them as a mark of my affectionate regard; but your father yesterday expressed such a liking for this particular cut that I think he would prefer it perhaps to any other effort however well intentioned. I have put Mrs. Lewes' name upon it.

I am as ready as an old hen. Not weather, I suppose, & a bad conscience.

our address in Ramsgate will be 9 Royal Crescent; I wish I could persuade you & Mrs C. & Miss Sellers & y. little Prince to try a week there at the end of your stay in the country.

I have not had the sketch mounted as I care more for an album than for hanging up.

... nessun maggior dolore
che ricordarsi del tempo felice
nella miseria.

Pray give our united best regards to them when you see them on Saturday.

Ever sincerely yours

L. du Maurier.

We males are going to Ramsgate by boat.

Females by train.

Wishing you both a very happy new
year — as we had hoped to do
to-day in person, but were prevented —

Sincerely
Emma du Maurier

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY.
August, 1878.

From G. H. L.

DEAREST CHARLES,

Our even tenor has been varied with headaches and cramps, but with few visitors. Johnnie and Mary Cross, Edith Simcox, the Roundells, Dr. and Mrs. Congreve have paid visits of a few hours; Tom Trollope and his wife a visit of two days. This last was exciting and fatiguing but extremely pleasant. We had not seen them since '69. We took them walks—to the King Edward's School and to Tennyson. The poet read two new poems and as the Trollopes had never seen him before, the visit was a great treat to them. The Du Mauriers came that evening to dinner which went off very pleasantly, du Maurier making himself extremely agreeable, singing and telling stories until eleven at night.

Only Tennyson and Mrs. Greville among our neighbours have been *seen* by us this time. They have all learned that we desire retirement and respect it.

The other day Tennyson was to read to the Mutter and me his new play (for which I am responsible in so far that he had relinquished the subject in despair until my encouragement of his dramatic power made him take it once more in hand) but

when the day arrived Mutter was in bed with headache so I had to go alone.

When your removal has been accomplished I suppose we shall see you here—you must select your own time, whenever it will suit you and Gertrude best we shall be ready. Only let us know before hand in case of some engagement.

Ever your loving

PATER.

WITLEY.

September 4, 1878.

From George Eliot to Maud Lewes (aged four), the second of Charles's daughters.

MY DEAR LITTLE MAUDIE,

I am very glad to have a letter from you this morning. I read it aloud to grandpapa before breakfast. The sun was shining, the birds were singing, and Maudie was talking to us in her letter. We were very happy. I will kiss baby for you. Her cheeks are pink and she looks stronger than she did when she first came down. All the servants are fond of her and very good to her. She tries to say a few words, but the only word she is clever in is Papa. There are a great many tall trees all round us, and sometimes there are squirrels with bushy tails running up them so fast that you could hardly catch sight of them. There are little snakes in the cucumber bed. They like to be there because it keeps them warm. Last year there were a great

many moles, which are little black creatures with tiny white hands, and with these hands they scratch themselves holes for a long way under the ground, and throw out the earth in little hills above them. That spoils the grass, but the moles do not mean to be naughty. They are only working very hard to make themselves houses.

Grandpapa is better than he was and has not so many pains in his poor toes. You never had any pains in your toes, Maudie. I know you are very sorry that grandpapa should have pains. He sends his love and kisses to you and Blanche and so do I. And you must kiss papa and mamma for us, and tell them that we long very much to hear that you are all quite settled in Elm Cottage. When we see you again you will be taller than you were when we said "Good-bye" to you at Hampstead. For little girls grow as the flowers do and get taller and taller, and their faces a little larger. But Grandpapa and Grandmamma would know you were their little Maudie if they met you quite alone in the street without Mamma, and they would want you to come with them, and they would take care of you. They would know you because your little nose and mouth and eyes and your hair are not just exactly like other little girls' and still more because they would remember how you say—"Grandpapa." I have written this letter quite plainly, as if I thought you could read it. But I know you are not able to

read it yet. Miss Smith will be so good as to read it to you. Now good-bye, my dear Maudie. Here are all the kisses you are to give. Mamma, ** Papa, ** Blanche, **. And these ** you must keep for yourself.—

Your loving
GRANDMAMMA.

God bless you, dear ones,
Your loving father
G. W. Childs

CHAPTER VIII

DESOLATION

"HERE I and Sorrow sit."

This was the only entry in Marian's Journal on January 1st, 1879. Mr. Lewes had died on the 28th of the previous November, and she was desolate.

This desolation meant far more than the grief of a woman bereft of her most beloved. Death had not only robbed her of happiness; it had taken away part of herself. Her creative power lay with him in the grave on Highgate Hill.

The readers of George Eliot's novels do not realise what they owe to George Henry Lewes. His keen perception and steady faith in her genius awakened it to action; his tender, never-failing sympathy through the years that followed, supported her in times of depression and urged her on to renewed effort. He undertook the labours of her business correspondence, and the hundred and one responsibilities she must otherwise have borne herself, and which might have proved too great for her strength. Though a busy man engaged on scientific and editorial work, at any call from her he was at once at her side, concentrating all his energies to help

her and to dissipate the moods of despair of achievement to which George Eliot, like all imaginative writers—and more than most—was subject. George Eliot in her Journal and many of her letters, bears witness to this. She dedicated each book to him as it was finished. Two of these inscriptions may be given here :

On the MS. of " Adam Bede " is written :

" To my dear Husband, George Henry Lewes, I give the MS. of a work which would never have been written but for the happiness which his love has conferred on my life."

On " Romola " :

" To the Husband whose perfect love has been the best source of her insight and strength, this manuscript is given by his devoted wife, the author."

It was, however, something greater even than his love which made George Henry Lewes, as George Eliot truly says, " the source of her insight and strength " in her writings. Later on, after she had lost him, love came into her life again, and her stricken heart responded to it as many another woman's has done. But the inspiration to write, to create, to *do*, never came again.

We would hazard the conjecture that the reason for this lay chiefly, if not wholly, in the influence exercised in the first instance by George Eliot upon Mr. Lewes himself, and which, after their union, changed his outlook upon life, and in turn, through

the vivid intensity of his nature, reacted upon her, growing with the years.

The character of Mr. Lewes was a curiously complex one. Some who knew him and George Eliot before their union have told the writer that when they heard of what had happened they felt the gravest forebodings quite apart from the legal disabilities. The two seemed, to these friends, opposed in their views upon almost every subject, and anti-pathetic, even, in their attitude towards the deepest principles of life. It was not deemed possible that they could coalesce permanently, or endure one another's constant society for any length of time.

Marian was in earnest always : Lewes was reputed to be never in earnest. She, though not accepting any one form of religious dogma, was full of religious feeling and belief in its spirits : he scoffed at creeds, and believed, apparently, in nothing. His kindness of heart and loyalty in friendship were never in question, but his cynicism was a by-word among his intimates and his puckish habit of breaking out into unconventional speech—noticed by Marian herself when they first met—and tearing away veils most people, even in his set, thought should be respected, were attributes which it was felt the reserved and refined woman of his choice would passionately resent. It was true that Mr. Lewes was his own worst enemy, and, as we know, gave

most erroneous impressions of himself. He not only refused to wear his heart upon his sleeve, but went recklessly about declaring, in effect, that he had not got one. Nevertheless, the real position of affairs was grave enough. This he indicates vividly in a note in his Journal concerning Herbert Spencer—which as it discloses another side to that Philosopher—it is pleasant to quote:

"I owe Spencer a debt of gratitude," Mr. Lewes wrote in 1859, alluding to the time before he met Marian. "My acquaintance with him was the brightest ray in a very dreary *wasted* period of my life. I had given up all ambition whatever, lived from hand to mouth, and thought the evil of each day sufficient. The stimulus of his intellect, especially during our long walks, roused my energy once more, and revived my dormant love of science."

Then follow words which show what the union with Marian meant to Mr. Lewes.

"I owe Spencer another and a deeper debt. It was through him that I learned to know Marian—to know her was to love her—and since then my life has been a new birth. To her I owe all my prosperity and all my happiness. God bless her!"

Here lay the secret, we believe, of Lewes's power over her. He was a keen, incisive man; he had gone his own way all his life—and always would. But under the influence of this grave, gentle woman, with her nobility of character and her passionate

heart, a " new birth " came to his manhood and his character. Knowing this, and whence it came, the fiery vitality that was part of his nature was thrown into her service. She awakened all that was best and strongest in him, and he gave this to her in addition to his love. Nothing that either did, or felt, was hidden from the other. George Eliot's difficulties and sufferings over the creation of her books were all laid bare to Mr. Lewes, and it was his energy and ability, as well as his faith and admiration, which enabled her to overcome them.

His tenderness for her was wonderful, his devotion complete ; in the possession of his grandchildren are many mementoes of his love for her. There is a volume of " Popular Music of the Olden Time," especially bound, in which is inscribed :

" To Her who makes the Music of my life. From G. H. Lewes, February 1860."

And a copy of the " Encyclopédie d'Histoire Naturelle : Botanique " has the inscription :

" To my beloved Marian, the Flower of my existence —A New Year's Gift from her husband."

His letters in this volume give ample evidence that he felt more exultation in her success than she ever did.

And now he was dead.

But Marian, for all her sense of irreparable loss, did not sit idle.

" She began at once," writes Mr. Cross in the

" Life," " to occupy herself busily with Mr. Lewes's unfinished MSS., and on the 29th of January, less than two months after his death, she had decided upon founding a memorial to his name. This took the form of a Studentship of Physiology, called 'The George Henry Lewes Studentship,' at Cambridge."

The advertisement of the Trust stated: " This Studentship has been founded in memory of Mr. George Henry Lewes, for the purpose of enabling the holder, for the time being, to devote himself wholly to the prosecution of original research in Physiology. The studentship, the value of which is slightly under £200 per annum paid quarterly in advance, is tenable for three years, during which time the student is required to carry on, under the guidance of a director, physiological investigation, to the complete exclusion of all other professional occupations."

In the settlement of this matter, in writing the conclusion of " Theophrastus Such," and in preparing it for the Press, as well as in editing the last works written by Mr. Lewes, George Eliot spent the weary, hopeless months which followed. Around her all the time, and her greatest consolation, help and support, was the love of Charles Lewes and his wife and their little children. Her dependence upon that love, and her solicitude for their welfare, are shown in every line of the letters which now follow.

CHAPTER IX

LETTERS OF GEORGE ELIOT

1878–1879

4 o'clock.

Written in Dec., 1878, to Charles

DEAREST BOY,

I have been to the Paddington station and waited ½ an hour for the train and when after all it came, I missed you!

Everything is at cross-purposes. I forwarded to you a letter from Mr. Pulley and begged you to write to him that you would meet him (as he asked you to do) at the Devonshire Club to-morrow at half-past 5 to 6.

Do so now, pray, because it is important that you should see him. I should prefer your bringing Eliza*, unless it is a disadvantage to you to miss the office. Will you bring her and the children to lunch? or will it be better after? And you can go on to the Club from the Priory. I can take Eliza and the children home in the carriage.

THY MUTTER.

* Widow of Charles's brother, Herbert Lewes.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
May 30, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

I have this morning received the enclosed letter from Dr. David Kaufmann. Will you go to the Priory as soon as possible and take from the folio containing the Memorial articles on your Father, Mr. Harrison's article in *Academy*; the Article in the *Fortnightly*, the article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and any others in which there are *true* things about him and *nothing* quite mistaken. Articles which we do not think good may yet have something in them justly indicating your father's position as a writer. (You will *not*, of course, take the article in *Examiner* nor *Delbœuf's*). Then will you add to them this from the *Daily Telegraph* (which I send because I think there is no duplicate) and the list of the works which I copy on the opposite page, and write a letter to Kaufmann saying that you despatch these things together with a copy of the "Study of Psychology" according to his request, which I, being in the country, have forwarded to you.

It will be best to send your letter by post and ask Trübner to despatch the articles and volume *as soon as possible*—unless he can tell you how to

address and despatch it, so that you can see the thing done yourself.

It is very neglectful of X. not to send me any account of the subscription for the "Study of Psychology." In my experience that is always shown by a publisher as a matter of course. I am better, but the cold weather is unfavourable.

You will know that I am very anxious about having these things done at once.

Your loving
MUTTER.

WORKS BY GEORGE HENRY LEWES

History of Philosophy.	1845–1846	Enlarged Ed. of Hist. of Phil.	1857
The Spanish Drama . .	1846	Physiology of Common Life.	1859
Ranthorpe . . .	1847	Studies in Animal Life .	1862
Rose, Blanche and Violet .	1848	Aristotle	1864
Life of Robespièrre . .	1849	Revised Ed. of Hist. of Phil.	1867
Conte's Philosophy of the Sciences . . .	1853	Problems of Life and Mind, 1	1873
Life of Goethe . . .	1855	Problems of Life and Mind, 2	1875
Seaside Studies . . .	1858	Problems of Life and Mind, 3	1877
		The Study of Psychology .	1879

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
June 5, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

I was very glad to have your letter this morning with its satisfactory news. Do not in these times think of any building—only of repairs thorough enough to make the dwellings water-tight and

decent. Under those conditions I prefer old buildings to new. Mr. Oldaker, I suppose, spoke from a sufficient knowledge of actual circumstances and prospects, but I am rather surprised at his recommending to re-let on a yearly tenancy. That mode of holding is in the nature of things not favourable to good farming, and in the present state of Agricultural interests I should have thought that one great reason for a lease on the side of the Tenant was transferred to the Landlord's side, namely, that the Landlord would be in danger of being left by his Tenant *planté là* with the land on his own hands.

In any case let there be no pulling down to rebuild, no throwing of two cottages into one, but only attention to keep the roofs good and make sufficient windows for light and ventilation.

What weather for the poor people's holiday! On Whit Monday Mary Cross and Johnnie brought down little Alkie whom I had promised to have while his parents are away in France. We had to sit indoors the whole time looking at the rain. It is still very cold here and every morning I come down shivering. But I am getting better in health. My neighbour Mrs. Evans, called yesterday—a sweet woman, but she sat a whole hour, which is rather long for a call of that sort in which the talk is chiefly about Babies, Governesses, and husbands' occupations. I have got the same light carriage that we

had last year on the same terms, and the relief to the horse is great.

I forgot that I should wish to see the article (No. 2) by Caird in the *Contemporary* on Positivism. Will you please cut it out, and also the article No. 1 on the same subject and send them me by post ?

And will you find out the title of the book written by Mr. Haweis on Music ?

I have had a letter from Mrs. Congreve in which she speaks with much pleasure of your visit to her.

No letter from Trübner !

An envelope sent me by Mrs. Gibson and containing three letters, came stuck together with four or five seals and stamped as having been delivered *torn* at the Paddington office.

I am so glad that you are taking to the Latin reading, for it will be a continuous thread of interest for you in the midst of desultory things.

Poor little baby—I long to hear that her sweet apple of a face is quite free from specks.

Love to all from

Your faithful

MUTTER.

It was delightful news that " the Africans "* had had a visit to the Zoo. Remember to give a message of love from me when you see them.

* The Herbert Lewes children from Natal.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
June 10, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

Thanks for your letter and fulfilment of my requests.

You will like to know that Mr. Harrison has sent me a brief paper which is to be read to-day at the Metaphysical Society on the Social Factor in Psychology—opening with a quotation from the "Study of Psychology," and marking throughout his high appreciation of your Father's work. Also the Rector of Lincoln College kindly sent (with his initials only) to Trübner, four errata which he had found in reading the "Study of Psychology." Two of them are *my* fault alone. But the two others I shall lay at your door, you rascal, for they are *apti*tude instead of *atti*tude and *all*usion instead of *ill*usion. Trübner did not know who was the kind corrector and very properly sent the paper to me, offering to have the corrections made on the plates if I wished it. I said: "By all means," and have written to thank the Rector. What a blessing to find a man who really reads a book!

T. has sent me the number sold, apparently in consequence of a letter from you, which he calls *my* letter.

I have received the enclosed letter, with other papers (about Country Lodgings at Sevenoaks for poor Children). Will you some time when you can do it without inconvenience look out from the cupboard in the Dining-room a single copy of as many of my books, poems included, as you can find there and send them in a parcel to Mr. Rossiter, saying that they come from me for the Free Library. I hardly think there is a "Spanish Gypsy"—and mind, you must not send any but an *English* (*not* American) Edition, and that in the smaller *format* with the red cover. I cannot send them a "Theophrastus" at present. Please do not mind this trouble as it is for the *impecunious* readers. (You know I am nothing if not "sesquipedalian" and scientific, and a word of 5 syllables will do for both qualities.)

How could you form so wild a supposition as that I had Alkie to *stay* with me? Mary brought him for the day, and the Halls would have shuddered at the proposition that I should be asked to have him longer. He is a little man now, nearly 5 feet, and splendidly healthy. No! If I could have any children to stay with me they would be my grandchildren—I am not likely to go into "fancy work" of that kind when "plain work" is too much for me.

"I wish you could see Coquelin in "Tabourin." He is a wonderful actor when he gets the right part for him and he has a penetrating personality that

one cannot be indifferent to, though possibly it may be unpleasant for some people.

I was delighted to get the letter from E. proposing to send M. to school. Some stimulus of that kind is sadly needed for her, and I trust it will be managed.

Should you like to come to dinner on Saturday next and stay till Monday 8.34 train? Send me word whether you will, by return of post, because things for Saturday must be ordered on Friday.

Love to you all from

Your loving

MUTTER.

Fancy! Mrs. Pattison* has sent me word of a picture by a French artist in the *Salon* of this year, taken from "The Lifted Veil"—the moment when the resuscitated woman reveals her mistress's crime. Perhaps that hits the dominant French taste more than anything else of mine!

It was sadly dreamy of me to forget that the cupboard was locked up, especially as I did the locking myself. I am ruminating over the possibility of having Eliza and the 2 children along with you and Gertrude, etc., in July. The exceptionally fine weather you had on Saturday rejoiced me for your sake, but, alas, how little of that blessing we have to rejoice in! The hay harvest is grievously threatened.

* Wife of Mark Pattison.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY.
June 30, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

My most troublesome symptoms being almost got rid of I am beginning again to think of the great "Reception" as a possibility, and perhaps it will be well for Gertrude and you to fix the time (always in that provisional way that belongs to mortal doings) a week or two beforehand.

Shall we say that, all of us continuing well enough, you and Gertrude with the three children,* and Eliza with her two,† shall come down on Saturday the 12th? One may perhaps hope for more favourable weather by that time. Or would it be more prudent to defer the visit to the 19th? Our strawberries have not yet dropped all their blossoms. If ever they do ripen we shall have a fine crop. And the peas also will be abundant. (I have just sent down to Brock ‡ to know his opinion about the ripening, being myself still in bed.)

Sir Henry Maine has sent me the one letter that has rejoiced my heart about the "Study of Psychology." He says: "In this branch of Mr. Lewes's studies I am almost as one of the ignorant, but I think I have understood every sentence in the book

* Blanche, Maud and Elinor.
† Marian and Herbert.
‡ Her gardener at the Heights.

and I believe I have gained great knowledge from it. It has been the most satisfactory piece of work I have done for a long time." I have written to tell him that he has rescued me from my scepticism as to anyone's reading a serious book except the author or editor. I saw Trübner had given the book an excellent place in the Publisher's column of *The Times* the other day.

Mrs. Dowling * has just returned from Brock to say that he thinks the 12th will be the best time for the strawberries. Later on the birds will have taken their tithe from the best specimens. So let it be the 12th if possible. Please give the invitation to, and arrange for me with, Eliza, as I have enough to do in the way of writing, from filling up tax-papers to answering unknown correspondents.

Mr. Warren is getting the conditions of the "Studentship" settled, and I am sticking at Sheet E. for want of Foster's duplicates. But all things seem easier to me yesterday and to-day—the first days in which I have seemed really to be getting well.

With love to all

Your faithful

MUTTER.

* The Housekeeper.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
Wednesday, July 2, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

In obedience to your affectionate admonition I send you two letters which happen to have come this morning and may fairly be answered by deputy.

That from the Scotch young lady at Barcelona touches me because her expectations are only unreasonable from ignorance. I shall be thankful if you will write to her with tender consideration and explain my inability to undertake the reading of MSS. owing to my thorough occupation and now more than usually uncertain health. Tell her that I should advise her sister to carry on her novel some little way further and then send it straight to the Editor—say of *Macmillan's Magazine* or perhaps some more copious fiction-giving magazine such as *Tinsley's* or *Temple Bar*, or I know not what other of the uncountable publications of that order. Explain that in these quarters there are people whose proper occupation it is to read MSS. and that any fiction found suitable will be gladly received. These are the only real doors to publication and they are not to be opened by recommendations. At the same time indicate that there is little hope for her

sister of a remuneration which would dispense with her continuing other forms of work,* and that, in my opinion, at the age of twenty only a rare genius could produce anything really valuable in the form of fiction. The work—that rare genius apart—would necessarily be a reproduction of other books. (I should hope, poor thing, that the authoress has conquered the use of the auxiliary verbs better than the letter-writer.) You may omit this last from * if you think fit, for I have not time to form a safe judgment as to how much should be said. Only don't keep the girl too long without an answer.

The German who wants to translate "Theophrastus" please answer civilly to the effect that Messrs. Blackwood, whom I had commissioned to arrange about the translation, some time ago disposed of this right to another person.

I slipped back a little yesterday but last night and this morning I am again going on well, and my country doctor (Mr. Parsons) takes most intelligent care of me. I have good hope of being well enough to have all the olive branches on the 12th.

This morning Mr. Warren has sent me the Deed of Trust for the Studentship and Sir Charles (or Mr. Justice) Bowen has a copy in his hands for comment.

I seem to have written you a long letter to save writing two, which you will perhaps think might have been shorter ones—but I have really eased

myself by shifting the direct trouble on to your shoulders.

Your loving
MUTTER.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
Monday, July 7, 1879.
Dal letto.

DEAREST BOY,

On Saturday I had a rather severe relapse and though I am getting out of the tunnel into daylight, this renewal of weakness taken with the dreary prospects of the weather under which nothing ripens and fruits hardly escape rotting, makes it seem as if we should be wiser to defer the visit till the 19th, when the promised Rubicon of the 16th will have been passed. *Qu'en dis-tu?*

Baillère of Paris has asked me to let him publish a translation of the "Study of Psychology" (not of course paying anything) and I have gladly given him permission.

Ballantynes go on rapidly and regularly with the printing, but Michael Foster is slow in sending me his duplicates, so that I cannot be correspondingly rapid and regular.

The poem called "Memories" is from a lawyer

in Cornwall aged 71 who has been Clerk of the Peace at Bodmin for 41 years. He is evidently a very cultivated man. I have had two letters from him which Mrs. Gibson sent on. I don't know Sir Lewis Pelly's address, else I would write to him.

Fancy! I am ordered to drink champagne and am wasting my substance in riotous living at the rate of a pint bottle daily. Meanwhile my bodily substance in the shape of flesh is wasting also. But my doctor is the greatest possible comfort to me, and everything is being done for me that can be done. To counterbalance other pains I have had no headache to speak of all through this illness, and am generally able to get through some work of letter-writing and proof-reading—nay, some days I have played an hour on the piano. The relapse, thinks the doctor, may have been due to chills.

Love to all from

MUTTER.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
July 10, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

I am delighted to hear that the 19th will suit Gertrude as well as, or even better than, the 12th, and I shall live in hope that all conditions will in

another ten days be more favourable to our enjoyment. The weather is so heavy a public calamity that one is ashamed of dwelling on one's individual share in it, but it has doubtless contributed to my relapse, which has been rather severe.

Do not come on the 12th but wait till the 19th when, whether I am stronger or not, you yourself *must* come, that I may say good-bye to you before you go to Switzerland.

I am not at all anxious, for the MSS. are now in such a state that they might, if necessary, be put into Sully's hands for him to see them through the Press, and the legal draft of the Studentship is in Mr. Justice Bowen's hands, and only waits his approval to be engrossed and carried into practical completion.

Blackwood sent me a copy of good Mr. Brown's little book.* I was particularly pleased with his fine sense of the points in Harold Transome and his history, and throughout one is impressed with the beautiful nature of the man who is exhibiting himself, as we all do, in his interpretation of others. Blackwood says: "the *contrairy* chap always used to disguise a little his devotion to you, tempering as it were my enthusiasm." He was a most valuable member of the Blackwood establishment and a sad loss.

It is just possible that I may afterwards be the

* "The Ethics of George Eliot's Works," by J. C. Brown. Blackwood: 1879.

better for this sharp attack, for Mr. Parsons says I must long have been getting into this bad state of Apepsia, and symptoms were neglected until they declared themselves imperatively. In any case, things might have been much worse with me and I have abundant blessings.

I should think the "Study of Psychology" is selling from the way in which Trübner advertises it—for publishers rarely go on advertising without that guarantee.

Love to all
Great and Small
From the feeble MUTTER
Seven Stone
(Her weight is known)
When in heaviest clothes you put her.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY.
July 23, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

I will write to dear little Blanche, if not to-day, to-morrow.

No! I do not like your change of plan. I have no belief in the climate of Wales, and your Father and I were altogether disappointed with the places on the West coast, Barmouth included. I am sure it would not be anything like so good for you as a

foreign trip, and by *you* I mean emphatically Gertrude as well. I cannot bear to think of your being fixed for your one good holiday in rainy Wales, where the Methodists sing out of tune and there is a general aspect of moral dreariness. As for me, you need not, I think, be in the least anxious. Taking the worst view of the case nothing sudden is to be apprehended—I seem to be so thoroughly sound in the chief vital organs and I am certainly in many respects better than I was. Besides, when I am in pain the thought I most sustain myself with and childishly utter aloud to my own ears alone, is, that the trouble does not interfere with other lives—begins and ends in me. It would really grieve me if your holiday were interfered with on my account. You know, dear, any business at the Bank or with Mr. Warren, Mr. Cross will easily attend to, and he will order anything for me from town. And do not let any fear of a bad telegram haunt you, because, as I said, there is no reasonable ground for apprehending anything sudden. It is possible that in a few weeks I may be well. My next neighbours, the Fosters, sent a message yesterday by Mr. Parsons saying that Mr. Foster would be glad to bring me anything or to furnish me with anything out of his cellar. Then in August the Hollands will be here, and they are all kindness.

I am so glad, dear Gertrude, that you enjoyed the strawberries and wish I could send another basketful

by some white magic. Blanche's letter is very pretty in its choice of things to say—Maud at the head of her class!

The news about K. is of the dreariest—especially the untruthfulness. I am alarmed still more to find that she has a notion of borrowing money, and since she seems disposed to throw the blame on you, would it not be better after all for me to write to her? The worst of it is that in my present mood I could hardly help writing to her very severely.

These begging letters hurt me to read, but you were right in your answer. Mrs. C. is an offensive woman who gave me a great deal of annoyance a long time ago, and our correspondence ended with my giving her a rebuke which makes her application to me somewhat amazing—if one could be amazed at anything. She says, or *said*, that she had many grand relations.

I got the *Saturday Review*. It is excellent in tone, but the criticism is such as any instructed man could make on any theme and does not come from a standpoint of theory or conviction. Still I am very grateful for it. It is notably different from the Pepinistic articles in its sympathetic respect. I have said as much as I can manage to-day having just got a sheet from Foster which requires a great deal of attention.

Love to all from

MUTTER.

WITLEY.

July 24, 1879.

MY DEAR BLANCHE,

I was very much pleased to have a letter from you and to know all about your birthday.

"Evenings at Home" is a very pretty book. I read it when I was at school, and I think you will like to read many stories in it over and over again till you know them almost by heart. That is very nice to carry pretty things in your mind so that you can say them to yourself in the dark.

I am sure you must have liked being on the river in the steamboat for the first time. The wide river and the bridges, and the great buildings that can be seen a long way by the waterside are all very beautiful, are they not? It would seem to you like another and grander sort of picture after seeing the small pictures on the wall of the Exhibition. Only think! This was your seventh birthday, and when you have lived three times seven years you will be a tall woman, aged twenty-one, able to do almost everything for dear mamma, so that she may rest after doing so much as she does for you and Maud and Elinor.

Please give my love to Maud, and tell her that I am very glad to hear of her having been at the head of her class.

Yesterday there was sunshine here; the trees

made pretty shadows on the grass and the flowers lifted up their little faces and looked very happy. But this morning it rains again, and the hay that should be nice and dry, ready for the horses to eat, will all be wet through again. This makes people sorry.

I am writing this letter in bed, not being very well and my paper lies a long way off on a flat board, so it is not easy for me to write well. But I hope the letter is written plainly enough for you to read it without much trouble.

Give my love to papa and mamma and tell them that I feel a little better.

And now, good-bye, my dear Blanche. Whenever you think of me remember that I am your loving

GRANDMOTHER.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
July 25, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

Your "Explanation" is really converting. I withheld one reason I had against Barmouth. It was, that knowing what I had myself been under—the pressure of grief, I could not bear to think of you and Gertrude using up your time of invigoration

and refreshment in companionship with what is physically and morally depressing. And now I will admit against myself that our friends Mr. and Mrs. William Smith (you remember the husband as one of your Father's old and most valued friends—the author of " Thorndale ") used to spend a great deal of time at Barmouth and were enthusiastic about its charms. They were excellent judges. So, if you would really prefer this Welsh plan, adopt it with my blessing, and I shall be all the better pleased to feel that you are within our island, seeing that you would choose that for your own sakes.

With my usual precipitancy I have filled up the North Bank tax paper without the notification you mention. But I should think no harm would come of it since I stated that I carried on my vocation at Witley as well as in North Bank. As to the incidence of the tax, we paid well for knowledge on that subject.

I wish you could see the Tax collector here. Some day I will describe him to you or take you to see him, if I live.

I wrote to " Miss Blanche Lewes " yesterday and am hoping that she has received the letter this morning.

I think I remember hearing that lodgings were difficult to get at Barmouth. But I beseech you not to be seduced into going to Aberystwith—about the purgatorial character of *that* place I am well

assured by three days' durance there. I should mention that *our* visit to Wales was made in rainy weather.

I had some return of pain last night, but I am better this morning. Dr. Andrew Clark has been waiting to make an appointment with Sir James Paget, that they may come down together. I went out for a drive yesterday, going foot's pace—the first time for a long while. The sunshine was delicious.

Your loving
MUTTER.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
July 31, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

I am very sorry to trouble you on the last day of your stay in town, but you would satisfy an importunate want of mine if you could call at the Priory and put out Quain's "Anatomy" (3 vols.) for Mrs. Gibson to pack up and send by Rail. I think I cannot this time be wrong in saying that you will find the desired book in the bookcase between the windows of the dining-room.

Your loving
MUTTER.

No Paper come yet—Thursday 11.30 a.m.

THE HEIGHTS.

August 12, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

It is delightful to think of you at Barmouth to-day—the sky is so bright and the air, to my acute sensations, of a warmth quite unprecedented in this dismal summer. You seem to have had much the same alternations as we have had hitherto.

I am sorry to trouble you with the enclosed letter from an unconsciously impertinent American, but I think it is rather important that he should be set right. Will you send him an official letter to the effect that Mrs. Lewes (George Eliot) whom he has mistakenly addressed as Miss Marian Evans, has no photograph of herself and systematically abstains from giving her autograph. I send you the envelope as a specimen of what an American will do in the way of adventurous letter-directing.

"Theophrastus" goes on selling and Blackwoods have been printing an additional store. I have had the table of sales of my books between January 1 and June 30—more than 18,000 volumes (including the sale of Theo.).

But where there should have been joy in this there is silence.

I am getting much stronger in body but more depressed in mind.

Love to big and little from

MUTTER.

THE HEIGHTS.

September 21, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

I have just received this strange letter. I know the poor man had sent MSS. to your Father who expressed to me his pity for him. And I believe that two small works of this Mr. L.'s were printed—one in which I think he had a collaborateur, and another of a philosophical sort which I suppose must contain the "discovery" he refers to. Both are probably on the shelves in the little book room. The poor thing is too evidently mad, and I don't know what I can say to him that might be of use or comfort. Will you write him a word or two, just to let him know that I have received his letter and that I bear in mind your Father's interest in him, but that I am at present unable to correspond on general topics. Something of that sort, to save him from imagining that he is despised and neglected.

Lovely weather!

Always your loving

MUTTER.

I have re-opened my letter to ask you if you will look in the dining-room for *Kussmaul's* "Sprachstörungen." It is a thinnish book—I think on the bottom shelf between windows. I want it to verify a reference which is imperfectly given in a proof. Last proof but one came this morning (Monday)!

THE HEIGHTS.
October 3, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

I was not quite so well last week, but the ailment did not amount to a "relapse," and I am pretty well again now—expecting you to-morrow and particularly desiring you to come. There is a paper about the Succession Duty to fill up, and you will have to get the items of information about value, rent, etc.

Also, your Aunt Susanna wrote to me at the beginning of the week saying that Vivian* wanted to know if he might bring his wife here. I wrote to invite them to lunch and dinner to-morrow, feeling that your and Gertrude's presence at dinner would make the visit more lively for them. There is a Michaelmas goose to allure you and I trust that the heavens have wept their fill for a few days.

I am ashamed to tell you that I *had brought Kussmaul down!* Another time you will tell me to look again before I torment you.

Your loving
MUTTER.

* Professor Vivian Lewes, nephew of George Henry Lewes.

THE HEIGHTS.

Saturday, October 20, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

Thanks for the receipts. I have had a delightful bit of news from Dr. Foster this morning. He had mentioned to me before that there was an Edinburgh student whom he had in his mind as the right one to elect. This morning he writes :—" The Trustees meet to-morrow to receive my nomination. I have chosen Dr. Charles Roy, an Edinburgh man and Scotchman—not one of my own pupils. He is, I think, the most promising—by far the most promising, of our young physiologists, putting aside those who do not need the pecuniary assistance of the Studentship. And the help comes to him just when it is most needed—he is in full swing of work and was casting about for some means of supporting himself which would least interfere with his work, when I called his attention to the Studentship. I feel myself very gratified that I can at the very outset recommend just the man, as it appears to me, for the post."

This is a thing your Father would have chosen as a result of his life.

Mr. Sully's article is not strong, but there is evidence that he has taken pains to read what he writes about, and there is the effort to be just. What he seems least to have made out for himself

is the position to be given to the Biogr. History of Philosophy. But he is too young to appreciate what it did for the generation before him.

I feel for his sufferings under the crowing—especially the *waiting* for it. One is tempted to wish for a Charlotte Corday to assassinate the vocal plague.

Our household moves to London on the 30th. I am very well, though the sharp cold at the beginning of this week—indeed all this week until the outburst of sunshine this morning—has been rather trying.

I have several letters to write, so no more at present from

Thy loving
MUTTER.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
October 23, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

I am sorry about Mr. Webb, for the other day when Mr. Hamilton Aïdé was here I mentioned Mr. Webb to him, thinking that he would probably remember the successful Oriental time. He did remember it. I merely said that Mr. Webb had somehow slipped from the Academy walls and was

in need of lessons or other assured work, and Mr. Aïdé said he knew someone who was precisely in want of such lessons as Mr. W. could give—namely, in watercolour landscape. I asked him to take your address and write to you on the subject, as you would be able to tell him of Mr. Webb's whereabouts and occupations.

There is nothing for which I need trouble you about my return to town. Mrs. Gibson has been getting the house clean and we shall settle down at once. But the day of our return has been *un*settled by a letter from Mr. Jowett, proposing to come on the 29th, the former visit having been frustrated. At any rate I shall be in town at the beginning of the first week in November.

V. wrote to tell me that I had made a mistake in paying him his interest since it would not be due till Christmas. I don't know how I came to get the wrong notice into my head—unless it was owing to a general sense of cheques to be drawn by me on all occasions. In that note he said that his mother had asked for her money beforehand in order to help them on their wedding journey.

The other day I received from the Priory the enclosed letter from the Comte de Gobineau, addressed, of course, to your Father. I hardly think it demands any notice, but if you think it better to let him know, write him a brief letter without mentioning me.

We have had some lovely but cold autumnal days, alternating with dullness and less cold. I shall not be sorry to return to town so far as temperature is concerned.

Florence wrote to me the other day and I am not sure whether in answering I told her when I should be in town. If you see her, will you bear it in mind to tell her.

Love to all

from your loving
MUTTER.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
Tuesday, October 27, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

I have just had some news that grieves me. Mr. Blackwood is dangerously ill and I fear from Mr. William's* letter that there is little hope of recovery. He will be a heavy loss to me. He has been bound up with what I most cared for in my life for more than twenty years and his good qualities have made many things easy to me that without him would often have been difficult.

I wrote to Mr. Trübner to tell him that the printing of the " Problems " being finished I should be glad

* Mr. William Blackwood.

if he would arrange with you about the conditions of publication. He is at home now and has answered my letter. Bear in mind your Father's wish that the volumes should not be made dearer than necessary.

I am going to Weybridge* on Friday in order to leave the servants free while they finish preparations for departure, and I intend to be at the Priory on Saturday before dusk. But it is *just possible* that I may be detained till Monday morning. So if you have any good occupation for Sunday you had better call on your way home on Monday.

Your loving
MUTTER.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
Thursday Morning, October 29, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

I have just received a letter from Miss Simcox in which she says : " Has the man in whom you were interested (the clerk with failing sight) got anything to do ? If not, would the work of a School " Visitor " suit him ? The salary *begins* at £80 a year, the duties being to hunt up the children who should be in school. There is, of course, a good deal of clerical

* Mr. Cross's people.

work" (I suppose this means clerk's work) "but diversified with out-of-door duty; and men of high character are very much wanted, as they have a good deal of power for good or evil. At the present moment I have the power of recommending a visitor and it will be a pleasure if the opportunity is serviceable to one of whom Mr. Lewes thought highly. If he would take the post he had better write or see me as soon as possible—the latter before 10 or after 7."

What do you think of this? Would it be well for Ripley to try for such a post, or do you think his personality would hardly suffice?

Thy loving
MUTTER.

THE PRIORY,
NORTH BANK,
REGENT'S PARK.
Tuesday, November 10, 1879.

DEAREST BOY,

In sending you Ripley's letter I missed putting in a note to tell you that I had written to him decidedly advising him to remain in his present situation. The letter from Mr. King was exceedingly kind and I think he is a friend who would help Ripley to get another place if that in his own establishment were closed. The newspaper work would make

Ripley happier as well as bring in money. If you have anything to say to me, come round in the morning because of visitors in the afternoon—8 of them on Sunday.

Thy loving

MUTTER.

CHAPTER X

A NEW CHAPTER

ON the sixth day of May, 1880, Marian Lewes—as she had been in heart and life for a quarter of a century—became the wife of Mr. J. W. Cross, a "loved and trusted" friend of hers, and of Mr. Lewes, for the past fifteen years.

The event naturally caused a sensation at the time, and there were not wanting some of her oldest friends who blamed her for the act, as being a severe reflection upon her previous union with Mr. Lewes. The logic of this opinion, which has been expressed personally to the writer, is not very clear. George Eliot never, by written or spoken word, questioned the sacredness of marriage. There are many letters of hers on the subject, some of them in the present volume, and every one shows appreciation of the holiness of the matrimonial bond. Her books show this as clearly. That her union with Mr. Lewes could not be a legal one has no real bearing on the matter. In regard to the other side of the matter—faithfulness to Mr. Lewes and reverence for his memory—the whole subject is dealt with in George Eliot's "Life" by Mr. Cross himself. It is done very simply, quite

frankly, and in the best possible taste, and may be given as it stands.

" As the year went on (1880)," he writes, " George Eliot began to see her old friends again. But her life was nevertheless a life of heart-loneliness. Accustomed as she had been for so many years to *solitude à deux*, the want of close companionship continued to be very bitterly felt. She was in the habit of going with me very frequently to the National Gallery, and to other exhibitions of pictures; to the British Museum Sculptures, and to South Kensington. This constant association engrossed me completely, and was a new interest to her. A bond of mutual dependence had been formed between us. On the 28th March she came down to Weybridge " (where his family lived) " and stayed till the 30th, and on the 9th April it was finally decided that our marriage should take place as soon, and as privately, as might be found practicable."

Mr. Cross was able to give George Eliot something which greatly comforted her :—

" You can hardly think how sweet the name sister is to me," she wrote to Miss Eleanor Cross, during the short engagement. " I have not been called by it for so many, many years. Without your tenderness I do not believe it would have been possible for me to accept this wonderful renewal of my life. But now I cherish the thought that the family life will be the richer, and not the poorer, through your

brother's great gift of love to me. . . . The springs of affection are re-opened in me, and it will make me better to be among you—more loving and trustful. I valued Florence's little visit very much. You and she will come again, will you not?—to your sister."

George Eliot's hope was fulfilled. A lady who knew a sister of Mr. Cross very well, informed one of Mr. Lewes's grandchildren that the family: "at first disliking Johnnie's marriage, were completely won over—fascinated by George Eliot's charm. All fell in love with her."

It was a thoroughly happy marriage. Mr. Cross—a banker by profession—was a man of wide and cultivated literary taste. Though many years younger than George Eliot, he loved the pursuits she loved, and his devotion, apart from the many tributes to it paid by his wife in letters to friends, and to Mr. Lewes's son, is clearly shown by the change in her outlook. That is always the acid test of a second marriage, and Marian, though in a subdued, quiet way, became cheerful once more, and actively enjoyed life again.

The old friends gathered round her as of yore. There are letters to Mrs. Congreve and the Brays, and Madame Bodichon, and after a stay abroad she returned to The Heights at Witley and then to London.

"I have been amazingly well," she wrote to

Madame Bodichon in August, 1880, "through all the exertions of our travels, and in the latter half of the time have done a great deal of walking."

During the autumn they paid visits to friends in various parts of the country. But ill-health began, and her strength slowly but surely ebbed away, never to return.

One misapprehension which has gained currency concerning George Eliot's marriage should be dealt with here. It has been stated or inferred that her union with Mr. Cross was a blow to members of Mr. Lewes's family, and that though for her sake they refrained from any open expressions of feeling, they gravely resented her action.

This is not true. Charles Lewes himself gave his "Mütterchen" away, and it was with thankfulness that he knew another great love was to enter her life. He had a most cordial feeling for Mr. Cross. He considered that it was in every way a happy thing, and "Johnnie" became an additional member of a family united in the closest bonds of affectionate regard.

CHAPTER XI

LETTERS OF GEORGE ELIOT

May—November, 1880

HÔTEL VOUILLEMONT,
PARIS.
May 12, 1880.

To Charles from George Eliot on her honeymoon.

DEAREST BOY,

We have had quite an unclouded journey hitherto, both literally and figuratively. At Dover we rested at the King's Head as being more out of the way of acquaintances than the fashionable Lord Warden. Then we crossed the Channel, as in a fairy tale—without a disagreeable sensation—having a private, luxurious cabin on deck, so that we arrived at Amiens in excellent condition and walked out to enjoy the sight of the glorious Cathedral before dinner.

I don't know whether you and Gertrude have ever stayed at Amiens. If not, it is a thing to do when you want to abbreviate a railway journey, the Cathedral being much finer than Nôtre Dame. The Hôtel du Rhin is very comfortable and we were waited on by a good woman who said: " Je n'aime

pas les plaisirs—je n'ai jamais aimé les plaisirs "—her joy being daily work and peace.

The next day we came on to Paris, where quite the prettiest thing at this moment is the greenth and blossoming chestnut trees of the Champs Elysées. On Sunday it was a delight to me to see Johnnie's rapture at the sight of La Sainte Chapelle which, strange to say, in all his visits to Paris he had never seen before. We went to the Russian Church, but, owing to wrong information, arrived too late, and the beautiful priest with the miraculous bass voice was no longer there. So that expedition was a failure.

The pictures in the Louvre have been a chief occupation, with afternoon driving in the Bois. The Spring leafage and the grand heavens above it are really the best sight, and take the glory out of all pictures. This morning we are going to see the sculptures in the Louvre, and then the pictures in the Luxembourg, which it is a sort of pleasure to me to think that Johnnie has not yet seen.

I have been walking and standing for three hours in the day, but I bear it well and feel much stronger than when we set out.

One little streak of anxiety there is about the brooch I wore on Thursday morning—the most valued brooch I ever possessed. We asked Brett to telegraph to Dover if it were on the dressing table at the Priory, but we have not heard anything in reply.

Miss Simcox sent us two letters, one to J. enclosing one to me, lest as she says with her exquisite delicacy of tenderness, I should see the address to myself without knowing beforehand that I had her sympathy. Very kind letters also came to Johnnie from Professor W. Sellar and Mr. Harrison. But you will imagine my chief anxiety is to know that my dear Mrs. Congreve is not too much pained. Emily Clarke* wrote to the Poste Restante, delighted with the prospect of staying another half year at Leipsig, and wanting to know more about her new " Uncle." She was very fond of the beloved Pater, who was particularly kind to her. She used to remark of him that he seemed fuller of life than anyone she had ever seen before him.

I wonder whether the sun has always been shining with you, as it has been with us. I mean the physical sun in the heavens. But the wind is still edged with some sharpness. Tell me whether Gertrude and the children are come home and whether Gertrude is strengthened by the change.

You see Mr. Fawcett has very properly given one secretaryship to the young man who has so long been his right hand. And we read in Galignani yesterday that Sir William Harcourt is turned out of Oxford !

To-morrow morning we start for Dijon which will be the end of our day's journey. The next day we

* Daughter of George Eliot's sister Christiana.

shall arrive at Lyons and on Saturday at Avignon. If you cannot write early enough for the Poste Restante Lyons write to Avignon. Best love to Gertrude and kisses from "Grandmamma" to the children. I hope you have had fair news of Eliza. She seemed very grateful to Gertrude for going with her to the station. J. is gone out to look at some newspapers and I am scribbling meanwhile with an uncomfortable apparatus—a folio that will not hold my paper—which accounts, does it not? for every possible defect in a letter. Send me as much gossip as you have time to write in return and think of me always as the loving MUTTER.

HÔTEL DE L'EUROPE,
GRENOBLE.
May 21, 1880.

DEAREST BOY,

Your letter, full of what I wanted to know, was greedily read during three greasy courses of potage and fish on our arrival here. For we have changed our route and so had written for our letters to be sent hither from Avignon. This place is so magnificently situated in a smiling valley with the Isère flowing through it, and surrounded by grand and various lines of mountains, and we were so enraptured by our expedition yesterday to the Grande Chartreuse that we congratulate ourselves greatly on our choice

of route. To-day we shall take the two hours' journey to Chambéry, and from thence we intend to go through the Mont Cenis by Turin to Milan, where I should like to hear from you again. Any interesting letters you might send to me and I was very glad to have Barbara's, and such things are quite worth extra postage. I think I told you I had had a very sweet letter from Miss Simcox. I gathered from your having said that you would send or had sent a card to Mrs. Congreve that you had expected her to write to me at Avignon. But though our first thought this morning was to trot to the Poste there was nothing for me. We shall probably remain two or three days at Milan.

Mr. P. Bayne's (kindly meant) invitation is quite incomprehensible. If you can see Mrs. Pattison I should like you to tell her that I have been wondering for nearly a year that I did not hear from her, and tell her also that I had a bad illness at Witley in the summer, for I think she did not know of that, and probably imagined me neglectful of her.

Mr. Druce and Willie Cross are attending to anything wanted in connexion with the Chelsea house which will be in the hands of the builder and decorator for a long while to come. I shall be most grateful if you will attend to the Priory for me—hear any petitions from Mrs. Gibson, see to any rates or taxes (though I think these are all met for the present) and *faire le triage* of the correspondence.

Mrs. Benson wrote to J. that Lady Holland wanted to know whether we would let the Witley house to her brother Mr. G. Trevelyan during our absence, but J. is writing that our absence will be too short for that, and also that you and Gertrude will be going down. In any case I would not let it now that our servants are there. It was a satisfaction to me to know that G. and the children could go to Witley as early at least as the 22nd or 23rd June, for I think it unlikely that we shall want to wander beyond the second week in July. We shall begin to long for home just when the rest of the London world are longing for travel. We are seeing nature in her happiest moment now—the foliage on all the tremendous heights, the soft slopes and the richly clad villages on the way to the Chartreuse, is all fresh and tender, shone through by a sunlight which cherishes and does not burn us. In July will come more and more dust, more and more monotony.

I had but one regret in seeing the sublime beauty of the Grande Chatreuse. It was, that the Pater had not seen it. I would still give up my own life willingly if he could have the happiness instead of me. But marriage has seemed to restore me to my old self. I was getting hard, and if I had decided differently I think I should have become very selfish. To feel daily the loveliness of a nature close to one, and to be grateful to it, is the fountain of tenderness and strength to endure.

Glorious weather always and I am very well—quite amazingly able to get through fatigue.

I am curious about the "able State Paper," and I too, so far as my ignorance will carry me, conceive your possibilities in your present position as probably better than getting a private Secretaryship. Give "Grandmamma Cross's" love to Blanche and Maud and tell them she is in a country where there are mulberry trees all about to feed the silkworms.

I feel for poor Gertrude. Perhaps a little dissipation in French plays may be more curative than Broadstairs. There is no knowing what will answer with out strangely compounded frames. Best love to her and to Florence when you can remember to give it.

Always thy loving
MUTTER.

J. is deep in letter-writing in his own room, else I would ask him for a message.

MILAN.
May 28, 1880.

DEAREST BOY,

Many thanks for your delightful letter which came to me yesterday, with a loving though brief letter from Mrs. Congreve to keep it company in making the day agreeable.

While I think of it let me ask you to send a line to the confused Mrs. Bishop, seeing that she regards

her letter to George Eliot as a trust to be cared for by Mrs. Cross. When you write to me again I wish you would send me Mrs. Stowe's* letter. Finally, in the way of business, the notice of transfer from the Odessa waterworks is quite correct, and the document may be put in the fire.

The arrangement Gertrude has made for Marian is very satisfactory and I trust that Eliza is finding her Brighton life more cheery than that in her Hampstead lodgings.

We arrived here on Monday and have been induced by a nice quiet apartment and pleasant attendance at the Hôtel Gran Bretagna to carry out our plan of resting here and deliberately seeing what is to be seen in this cheerful prosperous city. I am glad to find that the Luini pictures come up to my remembrance of them and that Johnnie is much impressed by his introduction to them. I continue remarkably well and am every day surprising myself by the amount of walking, standing and looking that I can go through. To-morrow or the next day we intend to go on to Verona, then after a sufficient pause to enjoy that glorious place we shall move on to Padua and Venice, where it will be best for you to send me anything you may have to send. I like to see the letters. They make one realize the fact of one's home and little world there amid the dreaminess of foreign travel. We take our

* Harriet Beecher Stowe.

meals in our own apartment and see nothing of our fellow guests in the hotel—only hear their British and American voices when they air themselves in the *Cortile* after their dinner. Last evening, to satisfy Johnnie's curiosity, we went to see Rossi in "Hamlet." I had seen him in the part in London and thought him sufficiently bad then, but he is certainly far worse when he is intending to enrapture his own countrymen. Anything so unintelligent, so —*drunken* as the performance last night I never saw on any stage, English or foreign. In the scene with his mother he roared (hoarsely) and stamped and pulled the poor woman's arms as if he meant to put them out of joint. One would be prepared to enjoy Irving after seeing Rossi.

I hope you will be able to send me word that poor Constance* goes on well with her babe and that Aunt Susanna is less of an invalid. Your account of poor Mrs. S. is alarming, but we can hardly wonder that such persistent pain and sleeplessness as she has had to endure should make her snatch at any chance of relief. We cannot be tender and indulgent enough to those who are going through bodily suffering.

I have had a very nice letter from the Master of Balliol†—which was more than I expected. And so is your account of Herbert Spencer's sympathy.

* Mrs. Vivian Lewes.
† Dr. Jowett.

The only thing I missed in your first letter was some little description of your interview with Mrs. Congreve. You usually manage to give a good idea of everything you have seen and done in a masterly sketch with a few lines rightly chosen. The decline of merit in your State paper after you had finished writing it is an inherited experience. I am wondering what it can be about.

The weather has hitherto been delicious, not excessively warm, always with a pleasant movement in the air; but this morning there is a decided advance in heat, and we shall both have our theory of great heat being the best thing for us well tested in the next month. The haste with which I made my preparations hindered me from preparing quite perfectly for the needs of travel in the way of costume, and in foreign towns one can never supply omissions made before starting. By the way, the friends who blame me for not giving them notice of my marriage beforehand should know that it was not decided for more than a fortnight before it took place and that half that fortnight I was a mere incorporation of influenza. Else I should certainly have told one or two a little earlier than I did.

My love to Gertrude and the children and desire for all blessing to you all from

MUTTER.

I suppose you told the gardener to plant more ivy, when necessary.

VENICE.

June 9, 1880.

DEAREST BOY,

We both enjoyed reading your letter on the morning after our arrival at this enchanting city, where the glorious light, with comparative stillness and total absence of dust, makes a Paradise much more desirable than that painted by Tintoretto on the wall of the Consiglio Maggiore. Nothing but the advent of mosquitoes would make it easy for us to tear ourselves away from this place, where "every prospect pleases," but alas, where one is obliged to admit that man is somewhat vile. I am sadly disappointed in the aspect of the Venetian populace. Even physically they look less endowed than I thought them when we were here under the Austrian dominion. We have hardly seen a sweet or noble woman's face since we arrived, but the men are not quite so ill-looking as the women.

To speak of more personal matters I wish you could comfort me a little about the apparent inexplicable failure of the letters I wrote to some of my friends, letters intended to reach them on the morning of my marriage. I observed that in Mrs. Bray's letter she said: "Knowing only the *bare fact* of your marriage"—which I for the moment thought strange, but did not follow out to the natural inference that she had not received my letter,

telling her various things beyond the "bare fact." The other day, however, I had a letter from Madame Bodichon to whom I had addressed a letter of announcement at the same time with the one to Mrs. Bray. And Madame Bodichon says she never received any letter from me before the one I wrote from abroad in answer to hers. She says, by way of explanation—"I think you must have locked the letters you speak of in your drawer." But I feel quite sure that I placed letters to Mrs. Bray, Madame Bodichon, Mrs. Burne Jones and Mr. William Blackwood on the slab to be taken to the post as usual by Burkin. Will you, when you are next at the Priory, be kind enough to look at W. Blackwood's letter to see whether it contains any indication of his having received mine ? If they have all missed I can only conclude that Burkin had some misfortune with the letters. The result is very painful to me, and especially that Mrs. Bray and Mrs. Burne Jones should have believed me to be totally silent to them.

Your news about Eliza and Marian is very satisfactory. I am so glad that she is liking any acquaintance and Mrs. Macaulay, I imagine, is worth liking. If Blanche turns out to have a musical gift—which she seems to have a right to by inheritance—it will add to your happiness. One of the girls should have a talent for instrumental execution and another a voice like her mother's, and then we

should be contented. Talking of music the singing here (by itinerant performers in gondolas) is disgraceful to Venice and to Italy. Coarse voices, much out of tune, make one shudder when they strike suddenly under the window.

I should like to see your paper about Telegraph reform, so keep me a copy and leave it at Witley for me.

Mr. W.'s letter was as graceful and full of feeling as all his writings and sayings to me have been since we first met him at Weimar nearly twenty-six years ago. We always feared that his marriage was the faithful fulfilment of some pledge without any actual attraction of the one soul towards the other. But our conjectures in such matters are little to be trusted.

Our days here are passed quite deliciously. We see a few beautiful pictures or other objects of interest and dwell on them sufficiently every morning, not hurrying ourselves to do much, and afterwards we have a "giro" in our gondola, enjoying the air and the sight of marvellous Venice from various points of view and under various aspects. Hitherto we have had no *heat*, only warmth with a light breeze. To-day for the first time one thinks that violent exercise must be terribly trying for our red-skinned fellow-mortals at work on the gondolas and barges. But for us it is only pleasant to find the air warm enough for sitting out in the evening.

We are at the Hôtel de l'Europe, on the Grand Canal as you remember, just opposite the Dogana. But when you write to me it will be better to send as before to the Poste Restante.

We shall not soon run away from Venice unless some plague—*e.g.*, mosquitoes—should arise to drive us. We edify ourselves with what Ruskin has written about Venice in an agreeable pamphlet shape, using his knowledge gratefully, and shutting our ears to his wrathful inuendoes against the whole modern world. And we are now nearly at the end of Alfieri's "Autobiography," which serves as an Italian exercise for J. while it is a deeply interesting study of character.

I hope that the French plays will not fall below your expectations, or at least that you will be able to dispose of any tickets you may not care to use yourselves.

If you are writing to Eliza give my love to her, and tell her that I am anxious to know of her, and Bertie's health being benefited by Brighton. I suppose you have had no heat in England to make Brighton undesirable, for Mary wrote to say the other day that the weather was still cold.

Best love to Gertrude and the children. They must get down to Witley by the 23rd, will they not? And if you want to make an excursion with them there are carriages to be had at the public-house near the station. Mr. and Mrs. Evans, I think,

hire a very comfortable vehicle for their family from that place.

Johnnie sends hearty love and I am scribbling to begin reading with him. He is delighted with your letters.

Always your loving
MUTTER.

STUTTGARDT.
July 7, 1880.

DEAREST CHILDREN,

I was made very glad by Gertrude's letter which assured me that Witley had been enjoyed by you and the little ones. We stayed six days at Innsprück, finding it more and more beautiful under the sunshine, which had been wanting to it during our first two days. Then we went on to Munich and yesterday we arrived here, as a temporary resting place on our way to Wildbad, which we hope will put the finishing touch to Johnnie's recovery of his usual health. I do not know whether Willie* will stay with us there or return home. He amuses himself usually away from us and appears whenever he can make himself serviceable, so that I shall be sorry to part with him. I wish I had been able to let you know in time that you could have remained a little longer at Witley, as I think we shall hardly

* Brother of J. W. Cross.

be at home before the 20th, if we find Wildbad what we want. Your Mutter is marvellously well and strong. It seems more natural to her to have anxiety than to be free from it, and she has been throughout "à la hauteur des circonstances." Let us hope she will not run down like a jellyfish now that her anxiety is over.

I have hardly any time to write, for either we are out of doors or I am reading with Johnnie and I have literally been unable to answer either of your dear letters until this morning, when I am doing so in haste that I may be ready to walk out. It was a comfort to me to know that the servants had behaved nicely and made Gertrude comfortable. Having the children would be a festival to Mrs. Dowling. I wonder where you will go for the August holiday. Write to me at Poste Restante, Wildbad, and by the time I answer you again I shall probably be able to say when we shall return home.

Give Grandmamma's love to the children and believe that you always have the tenderest from the faithful

MUTTER.

Please tell Mrs. Hill* that I rejoiced to think of her having enjoyed Witley.

* Gertrude's mother.

WILDBAD.

July 13, 1880.

DEAREST BOY,

I received your welcome letter yesterday morning, and felt inclined to answer it the next minute. But yesterday Willie left us, and the after-breakfast time, when I usually have half an hour at liberty, was taken up in accompanying him to the railway station. He is well tanned and much more robust than when he came to us and his sisters are rather in want of his presence in their crisis of taking a new home Johnnie is quite well again but is inclined to linger a little in the sweet air of the Schwarzwald, which comes to one on gently stirred wings laden with the scent of the pine forests. We mean to drive from here to Baden which is within easy distance.

While I think of it, let me beg you to tell me about Eliza, and her future address when you know it. At present I am uncertain about the date of our arrival at home, but of course I shall let Mrs. Dowling know the exact time as soon as I am able to do so. Your programme for the holiday seems very promising, and the additional week will make a desirable difference, carrying off the fringes of mere travel from your precious month. About the Black Forest, Willie says that Baden Weiler is much more lovely than this place. He was there, I think, last year with Mr. Hall, and is rather rapturous about the

scenery and general characteristics of that third Baden, so if you get near it you may perhaps make a fortunate experiment in going thither. I remember it was a favourite place of the Benzons.

14*th*. I had written so far yesterday when we sallied forth for a walk over the mountain to a place where we could rest and lunch, returning in the afternoon. The sky was brilliant. But in half an hour the clouds gathered and threatened a storm. We were prudent enough to turn back and by the time we were in the Hotel again the thunder was rolling and the rain pouring down. This continued till about two o'clock and then again the sky became clear. I never saw so incalculable a state of weather as we have in this valley. One quarter of an hour the blue sky is only flecked by the lightest cirrhus clouds, the next it is almost hidden by dark rain clouds. But we are going to start on our promised expedition this morning, the sunshine flattering us that it is quite confirmed.

I have not the least notion who Miss Dennis is. It seems to me that I never heard you mention her. But if Gertrude is fond of her and Miss Flower makes a fourth, so as to give you freedom from the perpetual charge of a third person, it will enliven your journey to have pleasant company at will.

I thought I had paid every " bill " before leaving except the naughty Elderton's, who has obstinately kept back his account for seven years and more.

I have written to nobody but you for a long while, except Mrs. Stuart, whom I lately asked to send you word of her state that you might let me know of it. I wrote to her just to mention that the baths here are marvellously curative for rheumatic patients. But one always trembles about "recommending" places as well as people.

I have just asked Johnnie ,who like me is scribbling a hasty letter home, whether he will send his love to you, and he answers: "Yes—much."

We know hardly any news, but have gathered that there are troubles with Turkey again. Worse than that would be another failure in the harvest, and I sometimes fear that the storms may have greatly damaged the crops at home as well as in these regions.

We have just had letters from Weybridge which tell us that a dear young friend of the girls—of Eleanor* especially, whose comrade she has been for eighteen years—has lately died and they are feeling the loss greatly.

If there are any books at the Priory of a light sort (both in the moral and physical sense) such as you would like to carry with you on your journey, pray select them.

Love to the dear ones from

Your ever loving

MUTTER.

* Eleanor Cross, sister of J. W. Cross.

LUXEMBOURG.

July 21, 1880.

DEAREST BOY,

We shall not, I believe, get home till Monday next, the 26th. I hope that if you do not set off till the 30th, 31st or 1st, you will be able to run down as you propose, sending me a postcard to say so. Please bring me *all* letters. I am sorry I did not ask you to forward me Sir H. Holland's and Mr. Strachey's letters, now that I have been detained so long without answering them. The weather is very warm and slackens one's energies, making it only wise to get home by easy stages. It is a mistake to wear oneself out at the end of continental travel by taking long railway journeys. I *did* mean to give you all the numbers of the Blackwood stories.

Will you kindly send a postcard to Mrs. Dowling (I have lately written to her about preparations) telling her that we shall arrive at Witley by one of the *late* afternoon trains on Monday? When we get to Calais I shall probably be able to send her word of the exact hour, but it will be well for her to know the day at once.

Your loving, longing-to-see-you-again,

MUTTER.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
August 12, 1880.

DEAREST BOY,

I expected your letter, and expected too just the sort of letter I have received, telling me everything delightfully. Only I wish you had not told me about the deep cut in the finger because it makes me shudder at what it might have been.

I can follow you everywhere in your journeying except to Oberwesel. But you speak of the Rhine as if you had not been up it before, and I thought that you had "done" it with Gertrude in one of your former holidays. I hope you will have enjoyed St. Blasien and some of the walks there consecrated by the beloved Pater's footsteps. We lived in the Dépendance and had some rooms which were being reserved for a princess whose name I have forgotten. Then we reversed your drive and went to Freiburg, so that I can enter into your enjoyment of the Höllenthal. Heidelberg, I agree with you, is one of the most beautiful of German towns, but I fear it is not very healthy, so it was very well that you could make no long stay there. I am glad that your weather has been temperate, especially for Gertrude's sake, who, I know, finds heat very trying. Here we have now had four sunny and really hot days and

this morning promises to be a fifth. That is consolatory as to the harvest and is very agreeable as to our private life. The last two evenings we have walked in the garden after eight o'clock, the first time by starlight, the second under a vapoury sky with the red moon setting. The air was perfectly still and warm and I felt no need of extra clothing. I can make you no good return for your pleasant narrative, for our life has had no more important events than calls from neighbours and our calls in return. The Hollands are very kind and I hope that Johnnie will get some tennis with the young ones, as he much needs that exercise. He is gone into town again this morning, after being there yesterday, and he feels the length of railway rather fatiguing. It is a little unfortunate that we take the railway again to-morrow to pay our visit to the Druces at Sevenoaks, where, you may remember, Mr. Druce has built a beautiful house. But we shall stay till Tuesday and there will be plenty of lawn tennis so I think of the visit as altogether a salutary expedition. At the beginning of September we are to visit Mr. and Mrs. Otter at Ranley and after that I suppose we shall go to Six Mile for a day or two. Then our wanderings will be over.

I wrote yesterday to Eliza and sent her the cheque for August, so I shall have some news of her presently. And I had a letter from Susanna in which she says that Constance is now getting better and that Vivian

is with her in Cumberland, she herself keeping house for them at Greenwich. I shall send Susanna your letter to amuse her. It is very pleasing to me that she speaks of having greater happiness than she has known for years from her "ideal friendship" with the young lady whom you saw with her at Hastings.

I suppose you get a glimpse of the papers occasionally and know all about Mr. Gladstone's illness and recovery, the liberal majority *against* the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, and the deplorable railway accident to the Flying Scotchman and worse wreck of this ship with nearly a thousand pilgrims on board—all lost.

I went to the Priory the other day and found a treatise on "Blood Pressure" by Dr. Roy which he had sent me there and which he has published as the "George Henry Lewes Student." Dr. Roy's mother has lately died. She lived at Arbroath—Mr Main's town you remember—all which I only knew because a black-edged printed letter was sent to me addressed in Dr. Roy's handwriting. So I imagine that he has come to pursue his studies in England, as he intended to do. Delbœuf's article on the last volume of the Problems in the "*Athénæum Belge*" which you brought me) is very nicely done. He has read the book.

I shall long very much to hear good news of you once again before you turn homeward. I am pretty well, but I find myself more languid than I was

when abroad. I think the cause is perhaps the moisture of the climate.

Johnnie would send his love if he were here, as I wish he were, instead of having to breathe the air of the city. I hope Gertrude is getting some strength. Much love to her and to you, Dearest Boy. You have been a great comfort to

your loving

MUTTER.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODLAMING.
August 28, 1880.

DEAREST BOY,

I have been expecting to hear from you again for the last ten days, and though I trust the proverb, especially when there are five travelling together, I cannot help being anxious lest you should not have received my letter, written close on receiving yours and addressed as you desired to the Hotel at Champéry.

I send this note to Elm Cottage that you may not suppose me on any ground to have been forgetful of you. For we are going now to Ranley to see Mr. and Mrs. Otter and shall in returning pay a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Hall, so that if a letter came from you during the next week it would probably lie unopened till the 7th or 8th.

I imagine you must have had brilliant days, for here we have had excellent harvest weather, though the mornings have been often as misty as if it were the end of the old-fashioned September. The heat has not, I hope, been too great for Gertrude to get strength from change and exercise.

Send me an account of yourselves. Johnnie gets a little better every day and so each day is more enjoyable. But I am decidedly less well than I was when abroad. There is something languorous in this climate or rather in its effects.

Thy loving
MUTTER.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
September 8, 1880.

DEAREST BOY,

I got both your letters at Six Mile, Brett having kept the foreign one in reserve to send with other "missiles." My anxiety about you had been previously set at rest by a charming letter from dear Florence, in which she gave me a pretty account of the children. Please tell her that I felt very much her kindness in writing to me.

We reached home yesterday evening after two thoroughly pleasant visits which, however, left us some gladness to get home again.

Ranley is a healthy breezy place high on the Lincolnshire Wolds, but the heat was not less there than at Witley.

Mr. Otter is transformed into a Country gentleman with tenants around him who call him "Squire." He is as delightful as ever to talk to, full of humour and instruction, and Emily, at the head of a large household, with three little ones to love and care for, is a very pretty young matron.

At Six Mile we met among others Mr. and Mrs. Sidgwick. These excellent creatures have let their house, Hillside, that Mrs. Sidgwick may take the place of Principal in the new Newnham College, an adjunct to the one where Miss Clough presides. They count on living in the new house for at least a year, the motive being to lighten the difficulties of the double institution both as to money and management.

Best love to Gertrude and the ducklings

from MUTTER.

J. is gone into the city.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
September 19, 1880.

DEAREST BOY,

The *Saturday Review* arrived and I was very

glad to have it. The article, I think, is nicely done. I wonder how the volumes go on selling.

Your "news-letter" was very welcome, and I was especially glad to know that Gertrude tries to keep up her health by little devices of change, which help to keep the mind from too constant a self-consciousness.

Susanna sent me a card yesterday to say that Baby (with whom the parents had hurried home in great alarm) is now getting well.

I want to know Eliza's new address that I may send her the cheque for September, but I suppose that she is sure to send me word when she has decided on her new home. It was a disappointment to me to find that she had quarrelled with her new hosts, for in writing to me she described everything as quite satisfactory.

Johnnie sympathises with your disgust at the too too solid flesh that will not melt, but at present we are rejoiced that *he* is laying on a little flesh. He improves daily, and we supply the want of regular lawn tennis by indoor battledore and shuttlecock, at which I am becoming an expert with both right and left hand. One advantage of our high drawing-room is its fitness for this exercise, which warms one better, and exercises more muscles, than walking.

Our neighbours are very attentive and oblige us to make calls in return, but otherwise we have been enjoying entire quiet since our return from Cam-

bridgeshire. The rain is pouring down steadily again, and Mrs. Congreve writes that there is still wheat out in Warwickshire. It is exasperating that more haste is not made during the fine weather. Did you see in *The Times* the account of the American farmer who has 75,000 acres ?

Johnnie unites his love to that of your loving

MUTTER.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
Thursday, September 23, 1880.

DEAREST BOY,

I have been and am suffering under an attack of a comparatively mild sort, but I expect to be well in two or three days. I am just going to drive to Godalming to meet my husband. Hence I write this hurriedly, having suddenly remembered that you may want to go to K. on Saturday.

Friday. I was unable to finish my letter yesterday in time for the post, but I hope it will be early enough for you to-morrow. I have sent Eliza her cheque—had done so when you wrote, in consequence of a letter from her telling me her address.

We should like to see you and Gertrude from Saturday to Monday, some week in next month,

if it would be pleasant to you to "lie out" again now that you have had some weeks of home.

I think you said that you would like to have your Grandmamma's and your Uncle Edgar's portraits. It would be well if you could call for them on your way home *to-morrow*, as it may be necessary for us to have things moved from the Priory next week. And will you take the little Breton market-woman (in china) if you see it standing on my bedroom mantelpiece—lest any accident should happen to it?

Send us word when you would like to come—I mean as soon as you know when you would like to come.

Excuse my incoherence in this letter, for I am in the fourth day of headachiness. But I am getting better.

With all love, thy
MUTTER.

I find that Brett has put up the little woman inside the wardrobe.

BRIGHTON.
Thursday, October 7, 1880.

DEAREST BOY,

We think that I have gained something by being here and hence we intend to stay till Saturday or Monday. Let us, then, defer your and Gertrude's

visit till the following Saturday—the 16th ?—I am not well up in my Almanack.

Alas, I think there is no sort of continental edition of the "Problems," except a Russian translation of one of the first two volumes. Tauchnitz refused to publish volumes of an unfinished work, and Herzen's proposed translation of the third volume has, I suppose, not been achieved.

The "Study of Psychology" would be a good volume for your reading club, if the other were thought too long.

The first few days here were gloriously fine, but lately we have been having rain. This, however, is the least damp and most conveniently reached of coast places. Johnnie gets a game of real tennis—*jeu de paume*—every day, which does him great good. There is a public tennis court which can be bespoken for a particular hour in the day.

D. wrote to tell me she was going to Cheltenham. It lessen's one's regret that she wanders about in this way, to think that the variety of experience is a sort of culture for her.

You must think of me as being cared for in every way with a miraculous tenderness.

Our love to both.

MUTTER.

THE HEIGHTS,
WITLEY,
NR. GODALMING.
November 23, 1880.

DEAREST BOY,

Thanks for your pretty letter. I do not think I shall have many returns of Novembers, but there is every prospect that such as remain to me will be as happy as they can be made by the devoted tenderness which watches over me. Your years will probably be many, and it is cheering to me to think that you have many springs of happiness in your lot that are likely to grow fuller with advancing time.

You are quite welcome to have the Cornhill (to keep) after a week or so from its arrival, but you would not now find it at Cheyne Walk, as it has been brought down here.

We hope to arrive there at the end of next week, the servants going a few days beforehand to make ready.

When you wrote to me about the Grave, after you had been to see it and pay for tendance on it, you said that the gardener spoke of new ivy being necessary, but you did not say whether you had told him to plant it. I am so disappointed with the ivy-planting and the way in which the grave is now lost among the new ones round it that I am

constantly thinking how I could rescue the sight of it by having a new, higher and more distinctive iron railing to replace the present one. It is sad to me to think that the care against exposure to cold which is enforced upon me may prevent me from getting to Highgate for some time, as the cemetery is usually damp or else bleak.

The removal of the books from the Priory has been a very heavy piece of work, and Johnnie has had a hard service in going up and down daily for a week to superintend. At one time when your Father and I thought we should like to leave the Priory the books were always a drag that helped to deter us. However, the book-cases have all been very well fitted into the new spaces, and the books have had the benefit of being well dusted—a work that can never be got done by servants.

Has Mr. Sully many scientific and philosophical books of his own? I have thought that I should like to select some work of value in order to present it to him as a remembrancer of your Father.

Poor Miss Smith's lameness I hope is quite cured, and Gertrude's health undisturbed by extra anxieties. I had a very amiable, cheerful letter from Eliza the other day.

A spiritual embrace to your fivefold self from the loving

MUTTER.

The Heights, Witley,
Nr Godalming.

Nov. 29. 80

(Telegrams: Witley Station)

Dearest Boy Thanks for your pretty letter. I do not think I shall have many returns of Novembers, but there is every prospect that such as remain to me will be as happy as they can be made by the devoted tenderness which watches over me. Your years will probably be many, & it is cheering to me to think that you have many springs of happiness in your lot that are likely to grow fuller with advancing time.

You are quite welcome to have the Cornhill (& keep) after

a week or so from its arrival, but you would not now find it at Cheyne Walk, as it has been brought down here.

We hope to arrive there at the end of next week, the servants going a few days beforehand to make ready.

When you wrote to me about the grave, after you had been to see it & pay for tendance on it, you said that the gardener spoke of new ivy being necessary, but you did not say whether you had told him to plant it. I am so disappointed with the ivy-planting & the way in which the grave is now lost among the new ones round it that I am constantly thinking how

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Poor Miss Smith's lameness & hope
is quite cured, & Gertrude's health
and is tasked by extra anxieties.
I had a very amiable, cheerful
letter from Eliza the other day.

A spiritual embrace to your
pious self from the loving
Mother

CHAPTER XII

MEMORIES

ON the 18th of December, 1880, George Eliot caught a chill. She took no notice of it, and the next day, Sunday, received visits from friends as usual, though suffering from a sore throat. Among these friends was Herbert Spencer. That evening she became really ill, and three days later she had passed away.

"She died," Mr. Cross wrote, "as she would herself have chosen to die—without protracted pain, and with every faculty brightly vigorous"; and, it may be added, surrounded by the utmost care and tenderness.

Her grave is in Highgate Cemetery next to that of Mr. Lewes. It is well kept, and bright with the old-fashioned flowers she loved.

There are not many still alive who knew George Eliot in her family life, but from George Henry Lewes's grandchildren have been obtained some charming glimpses of her in her later years. Blanche Lewes (now Mrs. Hanson) writes: "I recollect her as very stately and dignified and always gracious and charming to us children. I particularly remember

the enormous number of armchairs in the drawing-room at the Priory, which mother told me were there because George Eliot and Grandpapa didn't like to sit in armchairs themselves unless everyone else in the room could do so too."

This is a characteristic touch, for not only did George Eliot dislike feeling that she was more comfortable than others, but she hated still more to be in any way enthroned, even at her receptions. It was also characteristic that the children were never thrust away into a room to play alone.

"We went into the drawing-room," Mrs. Hanson goes on, "and two rag dolls were produced, one dressed in scarlet, the other in royal blue. We played happily with these and listened to George Eliot talking to mother."

Maud Lewes (now Mrs. Hopwood) remembers two visits to the Priory, the first when she was five years old. The warmth of the welcome she received impressed the child, and "the table in the dining-room, with coloured jellies specially prepared for us."

The second visit was paid after Mr. Lewes's death.

"It seemed so sad and quiet without him. The solemnity of the occasion left a lasting impression upon us, and I think George Eliot meant that it should be so, for she had got for me a medal with the head of Jan Huss. Drawing me up to her side she showed it to me, and gave in a few words the story

of his life, and his death for conscience' sake. Then she put the medal into my hand and told me I was to keep it and to be prepared all through life to obey my conscience and do what was *right*. Her wonderfully beautiful, sad, deep voice made it all the more impressive, and I can hear it still."

The power of sympathy in George Eliot never left her. It even seemed to grow with her years. "She had a marvellous way," a friend lately said, "of making everyone feel at her best."

A former nursery governess to Mr. Lewes's grandchildren has a vivid remembrance of an unexpected visit paid them by George Eliot:

"I was quite alone," she writes, "when the carriage drove up, and George Eliot came down the garden walk. I felt quite inadequate to the occasion, and dreadfully nervous, but she put me at my ease at once by asking where I had bought the frilling I had in my frock, as she would like her maid to buy some for her like it. Imagine my feelings! She had descended to earth, and put herself on a sort of footing with me! From that moment I felt I could talk and entertain her. She asked to see my paintings, which, alas! I know now must have been very feeble attempts at art—but her sympathy cheered me, I remember, and made me aim at higher things." She thus describes a visit to the Priory:

"I see the long drawing-room" (the room where the famous receptions were held, and where the

rag dolls flourished). "The only piece of furniture I remember was a beautiful grand piano which seemed to stand quite apart from any other object in the room, as though it were a very honoured possession. Then I see a slight graceful figure in black, with smooth hair, and pale—her dress in simple lines from throat to feet, showing her waist-line. Her face I cannot describe, as I do not quite recall her features, but what I can remember was that you forgot everything else when she *spoke*. Her voice had a wonderfully sweet tone. It was more like music than a speaking voice."

As a companion picture to this may be given Mr. Cross's description of George Henry Lewes in the last year of his life at one of the receptions :

"I was at this time," he says, "in the habit of going over occasionally from Weybridge. In our drives in the neighbourhood of Witley Mr. Lewes used sometimes to be suddenly seized with severe cramping pains. I think he was himself aware that something was seriously wrong, but the moment the pain ceased the extraordinary buoyancy of his spirits returned. Nothing but death could quench that bright flame. Even in his worst days he had always a good story to tell ; and I remember on one occasion, in the drawing-room at Witley, between two bouts of pain, he sang through, with great *brio*, though without much voice, the greater part of the 'Barber of Seville,' George Eliot playing his accom-

paniment, and both of them thoroughly enjoying the fun."

Of her receptions, after describing Mr. Lewes's wonderful entertaining powers—" A brilliant talker, a delightful *raconteur*, versatile, full of resource." Mr. Cross writes :

" I think, however, that the majority of visitors delighted chiefly to come for the chance of a few words with George Eliot alone. When the drawing-room door opened a first glance revealed her always in the same low arm-chair on the left-hand side of the fire. On entering a visitor's eye was at once arrested by the massive head. The abundant hair, streaked with grey now, was draped with lace, arranged mantilla-fashion, coming to a point at the top of the forehead. If she were engaged in conversation her body was usually bent forward with eager, anxious desire to get as close as possible to the person with whom she talked. She had a great dislike to raising her voice, and often became so wholly absorbed in conversation that the announcement of an incoming visitor failed to attract her attention ; but the moment the eyes were lifted up and recognised a friend, they smiled a rare welcome—sincere, cordial, grave—a welcome that was felt to come straight from the heart. She was never weary of giving her best."

These last words might have been inscribed upon George Eliot's grave.

She was neither Saint nor Sage, though worshipped as such by her devotees. A great woman, she was at times impulsive in judgment, and liable to be prejudiced by feeling and by sentiment. Even her genius and unsurpassed creative powers owed the fulfilment of their promise partly to another. But in one respect there was no one like her. In her work, in her love, in every deed, and in all the relations of her life, George Eliot was never weary of giving her best.

THE END

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